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ABSTRACT

This policy analysis paper describes the alternative actions available at the federal policymaking level to enhance youth employment using one institutional mechanism: vocational education. The first section on source and background of the youth employment problem provides a context within which to view the policy problem being addressed. The second section focuses on what is known about the consequences of youth employment problems, specifically the private and social costs. Next, the policy analysis addresses possible causes of the above consequences as a target for action by vocational education. The fourth section moves from problem diagnosis to prescriptions and discusses what services would comprise a comprehensive policy to address youth employment. Services are linked to causes, and specific roles for voational education are suggested. The lessons of past experience with vocational education and other employment- and training-related policies are analyzed to assess the likely effectiveness of various services. Next, current youth employment policy is briefly summarized to examine which services are being provided and what limitations in quantity and quality to service might exist. The last section addresses policy alternatives specifically with recommendations to federal policymakers for enhancing the role of vocational education in improving youth employment. (YLB)

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Information Series No. 274

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

1984

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FOREWORD

Vocational education programs in the United States serve a diverse clientele with a multitude of programs in complex and diverse settings. The diversity and complexity of these settings contribute, in fact, to the federal policymakers' dilemma: how to formulate federal educational policy that is relevant in all settings.

Policy analysis, too, is complex and multiopinionated. This dual complexity of programs and policy analysis presents special problems for developers of policy options. The policy analyst's role is seldom simple, but the search for policy alternatives that are meaningful and usable is an essential undertaking if vocational education is to move forward.

Federal policymakers are the primary audience for this policy paper. However, state and local policymakers should find the presentation of policy options and the discussion of their advantages and disadvantages useful.

The National Center expresses its appreciation to George H. Copa, the policy paper author. Dr. Copa is Professor of Vocational and Technical Education and Associate Director of the Minnesota Research and Development Center for Vocational Education at the University of Minnesota. Recently, while on sabbatical leave from the University of Minnesota, Dr. Copa was a visiting scholar in the Administration, Planning, and Social Policy Program, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University.

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The National Center is indebted to the staff members who worked on the study. The study was conducted in the Information Systems Division, Dr. Joel Magisos, Associate Director. Dr. Floyd L. McKinney, Senior Research Specialist, served as Project Director and Alan Kohan as Graduate Research Associate. Dr. McKinney, a former secondary vocational education teacher, holds a Ph.D. in vocational education from Michigan State University. He has served as a university coordinator of graduate vocational education programs and as a division director in a state department of education. Mr. Kohan is a doctoral candidate in comprehensive vocational education at The Ohio State University and has a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Hawaii.

Patsy Slone served as secretary for the project. Joan Blank and Roxi Liming provided technical editing, and final editorial review of the paper was provided by Connie Faddis of the National Center Editorial Services area.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

PREFACE

Federal policymakers need to be aware of alternative policy options before they can make decisions regarding the optimal resolution of critical problems in vocational education. By utilizing the expertise of vocational educators, the policy options should provide policymakers with information about anticipated impacts, advantages, and disadvantages of each alternative.

Recognizing this need of federal policymakers, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), requested that the National Center for Research in Vocational Education conduct a study for the purpose of preparing policy analysis papers in eight priority areas of high national interest. The areas identified by OVAE were (1) private sector involvement with the vocational community, (2) entrepreneurship, (3) defense preparedness, (4) high technology, (5) youth employment, (6) special needs of special populations, (7) excellence in education, and (8) educational technology.

In accordance with the instructions received from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education conducted a limited competitive search for authors to develop policy analysis papers on the eight critical issues in vocational education. Vocational education faculty members from educational professional development (EPD) institutions of higher education entered the competition by submitting a five-page proposal. No proposals were received on the topic of defense preparedness. After an extensive internal and external review process, eight authors were approved by the Assistant Secretary for Vocational Education, U.S. Department of Education.

The authors were provided assistance in policy analysis procedures, identification of relevant literature, and feedback of draft papers by policy analysts and educators. The authors presented their papers at a seminar in Washington, D.C., for key federal vocational education policymakers.

Other policy papers produced in this series are these:

- Andrew A. Helwig, East Texas State University
  Alternative Training Options for Structurally Unemployed Older Workers

- Dennis R. Herschbach, University of Maryland
  Addressing Vocational Training and Retraining through Educational Technology: Policy Alternatives

- Ruth P. Hughes, Iowa State University
  Secondary Vocational Education: Imperative for Excellence

- Clyde F. Maurice, The Florida State University
  Private Sector Involvement with the Vocational Community: An Analysis of Policy Options

- L. Allen Phelps, University of Illinois
  An Analysis of Fiscal Policy Alternatives for Serving Special Populations in Vocational Education

- N. Alan Sheppard, Morgan State University, formerly at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
  A Policy Analysis of Professional Development and Personnel Preparation for Serving Special Populations

- Gordon I. Swanson, University of Minnesota
  Excellence in Vocational Education: A Policy Perspective

Floyd L. McKinney
Project Director and Senior Research Specialist

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Graduate Research Associate

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the United States, youth constitute one-fourth of the labor force but one-half of the unemployed (not counting the discouraged and involuntarily underemployed). Youth employment problems of this magnitude are linked to immediate and irretrievable losses in economic productivity (wasted resources), less than optimum human resource development (through increased training that would accompany employment), and a variety of social pathologies (e.g., crime, drug abuse). This policy analysis paper describes the actions available at the federal policy-making level to provide leadership and support for one institutional mechanism that enhances youth employment: *vocational education*.

Source and Background of the Youth Employment Problem

Examination of the size of the youth work force, characteristics of unemployed youth, past history of youth employment patterns, and future trends revealed the following:

- Youth are unemployed at a much higher rate than adults.
- Youth unemployment is concentrated among those of minority race, those living in poverty areas, and those with low educational attainment.
- The majority of youth make a reasonably smooth transition from school to some kind of work.
- The average unemployment rate for youth was 14.9 percent in 1981 (16.5 percent in September 1983).
- Approximately 20-25 percent of youth who are unemployed experience unemployment for fifteen weeks or longer.
- High rates of youth unemployment have been present since the 1960s with rates increasing during the 1970s and 1980s.
- The number of youths in the labor force will decline during the late 1980s and the 1990s. However, the number of youth of minority race in the labor force will decline at a much slower rate.

The target population for federal policy on youth employment can be broadly interpreted to be *all youth* (30 million in 1990), assuming they are all interested in preparing for work during or after the youth period of their lives. However, special focus for this policy analysis is on reducing the risk of *extended periods* of unemployment by youth (which affected approximately eight hundred thousand youth in 1981).

Likely Consequences of Youth Employment Problems

The merit of attention by vocational education to youth employment problems is first evaluated by examining the consequences to youth of extended periods of unemployment. These consequences include the following:

- Social costs: lost output (because of idle human resources), increased federal expenditures (for transfer payments and services to the unemployed and/or their families), and changes in criminal behavior (increased crime rate)
- Private costs: reduced future employment and earnings and diminished health

Notwithstanding the gaps, limitations, and subjective nature of the evidence on consequences, it is difficult to ignore even the *likely* short- and long-term effects of extended periods of youth unemployment. These consequences need to be weighed against those of other initiatives federal policy on vocational education might undertake (e.g., adult employment, increased productivity, sex equity, defense preparedness, technological advancement).

Possible Causes of Youth Employment Problems

Causation is an illusive concept when social phenomena are of concern. The possible causes linked to youth employment problems are divided into three categories:

- Demand-side causes: size of demand, work requirements, and access to demand
- Supply-side causes: size of supply, work qualifications, and access to supply
- Transition causes: quality and quantity of services

Two questions are used to guide analysis concerning possible causes: Which causes are relatively more important in determining (1) the size of youth unemployment and (2) the distribution of youth unemployment? The results indicated the following points:

- Youth unemployment has *multiple causes* with little evidence that the causes can be reduced to one or two as a focus for federal vocational education policy.
- The most important cause influencing the size of youth unemployment is lack of enough jobs. This problem is compounded by the large increase in the number of youth over the past twenty years and the "entry" periods of unemployment typical for youth joining the labor force in the United States.
- The distribution of youth unemployment seems most influenced by supply-side causes relating to deterioration of social institutions such as family, school, and community. Ready access to sufficient, high-quality vocational education, with needed support services, has potential for impact in this context.

Components of a Youth Employment Policy

Analysis of strategies designed to improve youth employment by employment-related education and training policy resulted in identifying the following major service components: access, education, information, transition, and work experience-related services. Illustrative activities appropriate to each service category are proposed for vocational education. Service components are then related to possible causes of youth unemployment based on an examination of the effectiveness of past employment-related education and training policy. Major findings are as follows:

- A wide array of services is needed at all times to ensure youth employment. Services must be sensitive and responsive to the varying vocational development status and other characteristics of youth, as well as the condition of the labor market.
- The identified services, for the most part, can be and are effective in improving youth employment.
- Vocational education is a major provider of education-related services, and to some extent most other types of services, needed to improve youth employment.
- Many other public and private agencies, institutions, and entities are also providing effective services to improve youth employment.
- The delivery of service components occurs at the local level in unique situations. Success of any federal initiative depends heavily on what localities and states are willing and able to do.

Alternatives and Recommendations for Vocational Education Policy on Youth Employment

On the basis of the above analysis, the following policy alternatives and related recommendations emerged for reaffirming, refining, and redirecting federal vocational education policy toward youth employment. The federal government is encouraged to assume leadership in ensuring the implementation of each recommendation.

Policy Alternative: Emphasis on Serving all Youth versus Youth with High Risk of Unemployment

- Vocational education should be responsive to the employability needs of *all youth* who want to work. Special focus of federal attention and resources should be directed to youth at most risk regarding sustained employment problems.
- All vocational education programs should be of high quality and up-to-date in technology.
- Professionals in vocational education should have a clear understanding of what they can accomplish and communicate this very clearly to various publics (especially employers).
- At a minimum, all vocational education programs should certify that students have learned employability (job-seeking and job-coping) skills.

- Vocational education programs should strive to attract students with a wide range of ability and socioeconomic status.

- Youth at most risk regarding sustained employability problems should have a long-term, individual employability plan.

Policy Alternative: Emphasis on Serving Younger versus Older Youth

- The similarities and differences in the goals of secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs should be clarified and communicated to the public. Similarities and differences should be evident in federal accountability requirements. These secondary and postsecondary programs should be responsive to the vocational development needs of their students.

- There should be closer articulation in the content and student transfer among secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs so as to compose a *system* of education responsive to the vocational development needs of youth and the labor market.

Policy Alternative: Emphasis on Providing Education Only versus Education and Other Services

- At a minimum, vocational education should teach career exploration and location and use of labor market information to all its students.

- The supervised work experience part of vocational education (cooperative vocational education) should maintain a definite classroom training component and a definite training plan; it should involve occupations with real learning possibilities. These programs should be made available by the tenth grade if they are to assist in reducing early high school separation (dropping out).

- Students in vocational education programs should have ready access to job placement and counseling services.

- Vocational education should coordinate its efforts with other agencies and organizations to provide youth employment service components effectively and efficiently.

Policy Alternative: Emphasis on Reducing Labor Market Supply-Side Causes versus Demand-Side Causes

- Vocational education should be responsive as a mechanism to increase the quality and quantity of labor market demand.

Limitations and Barriers

The major barriers to improving youth employment through federal vocational education policy through these recommendations are (1) insufficient job vacancies (labor demand), (2) expectations that are too high for limited federal resources, (3) problems of providing leadership to a

diverse and decentralized educational system, and (4) political feasibility of required changes. Since the major cause of youth employment problems is lack of jobs, vocational education's role in youth employment is destined to focus primarily on the following: reducing frictional unemployment, reducing structural unemployment resulting from lack of training, and fostering equal treatment of youth who seek employment.

CHAPTER 1

SOURCE AND BACKGROUND OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

Introduction

"Unemployment is the most serious economic problem now facing the United States" (*Economic Report of the President* 1983, p. 29). Three forms of unemployment are at work—frictional, cyclical, and structual—and all impact on youth employment*. In the United States, youth constitute one-fourth of the labor force but one-half of the unemployed (not counting the discouraged and involuntarily underemployed). Youth employment problems of this magnitude are linked to immediate loss in economic productivity (wasted resources), less than optimum human resource development (through the training that would accompany employment), and a variety of social pathologies (e.g., crime, drug abuse).

This policy analysis paper describes the alternative actions available at the federal policymaking level to enhance youth employment using one institutional mechanism: *vocational education*. The analysis is divided into six sections: (1) source and background of the youth employment problem, (2) likely consequences of youth employment problems, (3) possible causes of youth employment problems, (4) components of a youth employment policy, (5) overview of current federal youth employment policy, and (6) alternatives and recommendations for vocational education policy on youth employment. The section on source and background of the problem provides a context within which to view the policy problem being addressed (e.g., how big is it, how severe, geographic distribution, degree of concentration in particular groups, characteristics of people affected, past history, future trends). The second section focuses on what is known about the consequences of youth employment problems (e.g., what are the private and social costs, how substantial are the costs in the short and long run, how firmly are the casual linkages documented).

Next, the policy analysis addresses possible causes of the above consequences as a target for action by vocational education (e.g., what are the causes; how might they be grouped for thinking about solutions; and, again, how "hard" is the evidence on causations). The fourth section moves from problem diagnoses to prescriptions; that is, what services would make up a comprehensive policy to address youth employment. Services are linked to causes, and specific roles for vocational education are suggested. The lessons of past experience with vocational education and other employment and training-related policies are analyzed as a way to assess the likely effectiveness of various services. Next, a brief assessment is made of current youth employment policy as a means to examine which services are being provided and, more important for this paper, what limitations in quantity and quality of service might exist. Last, a section is devoted to addressing policy alternatives specifically with recommendations to federal policymakers for enhancing the role of vocational education in improving youth employment.

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*For the purposes of this paper, youth are those individuals age sixteen to twenty-four. This group is often subdivided into teenagers (sixteen to nineteen) and young workers (twenty to twenty-four). Another group not included here but also concerned and mentioned periodically are those age fourteen to fifteen.

Overview of the Youth Employment Problem

Essentially two aspects to the youth employment problem are revealed by an analysis of youth employment patterns. First, there is a disproportionate share of unemployment among youth as compared to older workers in the labor force. Basically, the point made repeatedly in the literature is that although youth make up about one-fourth (23.1 percent in 1981) of the labor force, they constitute almost one-half (45.2 percent) of the unemployed. Second, among unemployed youth, the unemployment is concentrated among those of minority race, those living in poverty areas and those with low educational attainment. Although youth of minority race make up approximately one-tenth (12.7 percent) of the youth labor force, they constitute approximately one-fourth (24.4 percent) of the unemployed youth. Similarily, youth living in poverty areas have an unemployment rate that is one and one-half times the rate of youth in in nonpoverty areas. The unemployment rate for high school dropouts is also more than one and one-half times that of high school graduates. Youth who have a combination of these characteristics—who are of minority race, live in poverty areas, and have low educational attainment—are particularly at risk regarding employment problems.

Size of Youth Work Force

In 1981, there were 37 million young people age sixteen to twenty-four. As shown in table 1, approximately two-thirds were labor force participants: they were employed or were actively looking for work. Therefore, the youth labor force was made up of about 25 million youth. Of this group, approximately 9 million were teenagers (age sixteen to nineteen) and 16 million were young workers (age twenty to twenty-four).

In defining the youth employment problem, two approaches can be taken. The *usual strategy* is to define the youth employment problem in terms of only unemployed youth, and particularly those with long periods of unemployment (fifteen weeks or longer). Sometimes these numbers are supplemented by information about discouraged youth workers and underemployed youth (i.e., working part-time but wanting full-time work). Using this strategy, the following statistics are considered insightful:

- In 1981, 3.7 million youth were unemployed (approximately 820,000 youth were unemployed for fifteen weeks or longer and 366,000 for twenty-seven weeks or longer).
- In 1981, 190,000 youth, age sixteen to nineteen, were not in the labor force because they did not think they could find a job (the numbers for age twenty to twenty-four were not readily available).
- In 1981, 1.6 million youth, age sixteen to twenty-four, were working part-time involuntarily (they would have preferred to work full-time).
- In 1981, 214,000 teenagers, age fourteen to fifteen, were unemployed. (*Employment and Training Report of the President, 1982*, A Table Series).

If these numbers are added, the number of unemployed youth swells to 5.7 million workers for those age sixteen to twenty-four, approximately 15 percent of the total youth population.

A *second strategy* for defining the youth employment problem, in some ways more responsive to the purpose of vocational education (as preparation of all youth for employment), is to consider

TABLE 1
TOTAL POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AGE 16-24, 1981 (THOUSANDS)

Characteristic	Total Populations [a]	Labor Force Participation [b]	
		Number	Percentage
Total, age 16+	170,062	108,670	63.9
Total, age 24+	133,027	83,584	62.8
Total, age 16-24	37,035	25,086	67.7
By age group			
16-19	16,208	8,988	55.4
20-24	20,827	16,099	77.3
By sex			
Female	18,828	11,662	61.9
Male	18,207	13,425	73.7
By race			
Black and other	4,572	3,198	69.9
White	32,463	21,888	67.4
By poverty			
Nonpoverty area	NA	NA	NA
Poverty area	NA	NA	NA
By place of residence (includes only 16-19)			
Central cities	4,186	2,112	50.5
Suburbs	6,671	3,893	58.4
Farm	527	284	60.1
Nonfarm (non-metropolitan)	4,885	2,697	55.2
By school enrollment (includes only age 16-19)			
Enrolled	15,909	7,352	46.2
Not enrolled	21,036	17,231	81.9
By educational status (of those not enrolled in college)			
High school graduate	1,407	1,180	83.9
School dropout	713	453	63.5

SOURCE: Adapted from *Employment and Training Report of the President, 1982,* A Tables Series (1982).

NOTE: Numbers may not add to totals because of rounding.

[a] In civilian noninstitutional population.
[b] In civilian labor force (does not include Armed Forces).

the needs of all youth (the 37 million) and particularly those who want to work—approximately two-thirds in 1981. Using this approach, the problem is to assist youth in deciding if they want to work and then to provide preparation to those who so choose. This policy paper will primarily address unemployed youth; however, it is important to recognize that any young person has the possibility of facing unemployment, even for extended periods; therefore, the target population of vocational education policy on youth employment may be quite large.

The size of the employed group of youth suggests that for most youth (approximately 85 percent) the transition from school to work is rather smooth on the average with present policy mechanisms in place (Ginsberg 1980; Feldstein and Ellwood 1982). However, for a substantial number of individuals, approximately 3.7 to 5.7 million, there is a period of being out of work while actively looking for work (or more work hours).

Characteristics of Unemployed Youth

The characteristics of unemployed youth are described in table 2. Highlights are as follows:

- Forty-seven percent are age sixteen to nineteen.
- Forty-four percent are female.
- Twenty-four percent are of minority race, 2.2 times the rate for white youth.
- Sixty-eight percent (of those age sixteen to nineteen) live in metropolitan areas.
- Twenty-nine percent are enrolled in school.
- Sixty-one percent of those not enrolled in college are high school graduates, although the unemployment rate for high school dropouts is 1.7 times that of high school graduates.
- Twenty-two percent have been unemployed for fifteen weeks or longer.
- Nine percent (of those age sixteen to nineteen) were unemployed because they left their last job, as opposed to losing the job or just entering or reentering the work force.
- Thirty-two percent (of those age sixteen to nineteen) seek clerical or service occupations; 34 percent would take any kind of job.
- Nineteen percent (of those age sixteen to twenty-one) would be willing to accept a job they want at below the minimum wage; 36 percent would do so at the minimum wage. (The percentage of those willing to accept these lower wages is much larger than the percentage of those who are actually employed at these wages.)
- Judging from the occupations held by those who are employed, 79 percent of the jobs entered would require less than a high school degree and 68 percent would require thirty days or less of specific vocational preparation (although the actual entry requirements may be substantially higher).

The characteristics of unemployed youth *first* testify that unemployment can happen to almost any youth. *Second*, unemployment of youth is concentrated disproportionately among those out

of school, those of minority race, high school dropouts, those living in poverty areas, and those living in metropolitan areas. *Third*, although the rate of unemployment is much higher for some groups such as those of minority race or high school dropouts, in terms of number of unemployed, they are in the minority. *Fourth*, youth unemployment is most serious in terms of extended time period for approximately 22 percent of unemployed youth, approximately eight hundred thousand youths. *Fifth*, youth tend to enter occupations in the clerical and service areas that on the average require (for adequate performance) less than a high school degree and only a small amount of specific vocational training. Unemployed youth seek similar occupations and are generally willing to accept lower wages than those who are already employed (*Employment and Training Report of the President, 1982* and Sherman 1983).

Past History of Youth Employment Patterns

The youth employment problem, either defined broadly in terms of the number of youth or narrowly in terms of only those unemployed, is not only a problem of the present. Examining data going back to 1956, as shown in table 3, reveals that the number of unemployed youth doubled between then and 1981. During the same time, the number in the labor force increased by a factor of two and one half. As might be expected, the number of unemployed youth also increased, from 0.8 million to 3.7 million—more than a fourfold increase. Further, the rate of youth unemployment has remained above 10 percent since the late 1960s, which is double the adult rate of unemployment. More disconcerting, the rate of youth unemployment has increased during the 1970s from 12.7 to 14.9 percent (17 percent increase). The rate has remained highest for the younger group (age sixteen to nineteen), whereas the older group (age twenty to twenty-four) has had the larger increase in number of unemployed during the 1970's. During the period 1956-1981, the unemployment rates for minority groups has been about double the rate for whites and their labor force participation rates lower—each rate getting worse with time. If the labor force participation rate for youth of minority race had been the same as for whites and there were no more jobs available, their unemployment rate would probably have been 50-60 percent in 1981.

Future Trends in Youth Employment Patterns

As the baby-boom population ages, the number of youth in the population and subsequently in the labor force is likely to decline as shown by the projections delineated in table 4. Although the total number of youth in the labor force grew from 19.9 million in 1970 to 25.6 million in 1980, it is expected to decline to a projected 23.8 million by 1990. By some, this decline is interpreted as an improvement in the youth employment condition. However, as pointed out previously, the youth employment problem, narrowly defined, is not a problem for the total youth population. Rather it is concentrated among minority groups, particularly those living in poverty areas. A closer look at the labor force projections shows that major reductions will be for white males (the group with fewest employment problems); reductions for nonwhites will increase through 1985, decrease by one hundred thousand between 1985 and 1990, and then increase again between 1990 and 1995. Considered together with the continued competition of adult women and illegal aliens for youth jobs, this finding suggests that the problem of youth employment will most likely remain significant into the 1990s (Congress of the United States, 1982).

TABLE 2

EMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED, AGE 16-24, 1981 (THOUSANDS)

Characteristics	Employed		Unemployed	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total, age 16+	100,397	92.4	8.273	7.6
Total, age 24+	79,049	94.6	4,534	5.4
Total, age 16-24	21,348	85.1	3,739	14.9
By age group				
16-19	7,225	80.4	1,763	19.6
20-24	14,122	87.7	1,976	12.3
By sex				
Female	10,028	36.0	1,633	14.0
Male	11,319	84.3	2,106	15.7
By race				
Black and other	2,283	71.4	914	28.6
White	19,065	87.1	2,824	12.9
By poverty				
Nonpoverty area	NA	NA	NA	18.4
Poverty area	NA	NA	NA	25.9
By place of residence (includes only age 16-19)				
Central cities	1,590	75.4	520	24.6
Suburbs	3,223	82.7	672	17.3
Farm	259	91.2	25	8.8
Nonfarm (nonmetropolitan)	2,279	79.8	545	20.2
By school enrollment (includes only age 16-19)				
Enrolled	6,292	85.6	1,062	14.4
Not enrolled	14,657	85.0	2,579	15.0
By educational status (of those not enrolled in college)				
High school graduate	927	78.6	253	21.4
School dropout	289	63.8	164	36.2
Reason for unemployment (includes only age 16-19)				
Lost last job	NA	NA	386	21.9
Left last job	NA	NA	162	9.2
Reentered labor force	NA	NA	487	27.6
Never worked before	NA	NA	728	41.3
Length of unemployment				
Less than 15 weeks	NA	NA	2,919	78.0
15-26 weeks	NA	NA	455	12.2
17 weeks or more	NA	NA	366	9.8

TABLE 2 (continued)

Characteristics	Employed Number	Employed Percentage	Unemployed Number	Unemployed Percentage
Occupation held (or sought) (age 16-21)				
Professional, technical, and kindred	556	4.0	107	3.0
Managers and administrators	324	2.0	22	1.0
Sales workers	1,086	8.0	251	8.0
Clerical and kindred	2,938	23.0	500	15.0
Craftsperson and kindred	1,081	8.0	235	7.0
Operatives	1,583	13,0	207	7.0
Laborers, except farm	1,323	10.0	285	9.0
Farmers and farm workers	263	2.0	19	1.0
Service workers	3.775	29.0	553	17.0
(Any kind of job)	–	–	1,127	34.0
Hourly wages earned (or lowest acceptable wage) (age 16-21)				
Less than $2.50	1,011	8.0	57	2.0
$2.50 - $3.34	1,953	15.0	594	17.0
$3.35 (federal minimum wage)	1,482	11.0	1,176	36.0
$3.36 - $4.49	4,254	33.0	944	26.0
More than $5.00	3,298	26.0	335	10.0
Data not available	515	4.0	207	6.0
General education required by occupation (age 16-21)				
Up to 8 years	3,600	28.0	NA	NA
9-11 years	6,650	51.0	NA	NA
12 years	1,800	14.0	NA	NA
Over 12 years	790	6.0	NA	NA
Specific vocational preparation required by occupation (age 16-21)				
Short demonstration	6,012	46.0	NA	NA
Up to and including 30 days	2,792	22.0	NA	NA
31 days, up to and including 3 months	2,406	19.0	NA	NA
3 months, up to and including 6 months	1,084	8.0	NA	NA
6 months to 1 year	286	2.0	NA	NA
1 to 2 years	185	1.0	NA	NA
More than 2 years	175	1.0	NA	NA

SOURCE: (Total, age 16 + through length of unemployment) Adapted from *Employment and Training Report of the President, 1982,* A & B Tables (1982). (Occupations held through specific vocational preparation) Sherman, S.W. *Education for Tomorrow's Jobs,* A Tables Series (1983).

NOTE: Numbers may not add up to totals because of rounding. Special note on category: Hourly Wages Earned—the category of Wages, $4.50 - $4.99 was missing from table for employed persons.

TABLE 3

TRENDS IN YOUTH POPULATION, LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT, 1952-1981 (THOUSANDS)

Characteristic		Year					
		1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981
Total population (age 16-24)	Number	17,806	21,266	24,142	24,896	35,798	36,945
Labor force participation	Number	10,237	11,883	14,967	18,801	23,338	25,080
By age group							
16-19	Number	4,297	4,935	6,557	7,470	9,055	8,981
	Percentage	40.6	46.7	48.0	49.4	54.5	55.8
20-24	Number	5,940	6,952	8,410	11,331	14,284	16,099
	Percentage	64.1	65.7	66.5	69.3	74.7	77.3
By race							
Black and other	Number	1,274	1,491	1,815	2,221	2,805	3,198
	Percentage	56.5	55.6	55.4	52.6	52.9	54.1
White	Number	8,963	10,387	13,151	16,570	20,533	21,888
	Percentage	58.0	56.4	53.2	63.2	67.5	70.3
Unemployed	Number	873	1,551	1,282	2,391	3,434	3,738
	Percentage	8.5	13,0	8.6	12.7	14.7	14.9
By age group							
16-19	Number	478	828	836	1,262	1,719	1,763
	Percentage	11.1	16.8	12.7	16.9	19.0	19.6
20-24	Number	395	722	447	1,130	1,714	1,976
	Percentage	6.6	10.4	5.3	10.0	12.0	12.3
By race							
Black and other	Number	194	315	293	490	744	914
	Percentage	15.2	21.1	16.1	22.1	26.5	28.6
White	Number	579	1,235	989	1,901	2,690	2,824
	Percentage	6.2	11.9	7.5	11.5	13.1	12.9

SOURCE: Adapted from *Employment and Training Report of the President, 1982,* A Tables Series (1982).

TABLE 4

PROJECTIONS OF TOTAL POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE, 1970-2000, AGE 16-24 (THOUSANDS)

Characteristics	Year						
	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total population	32,491	36,544	38,736	35,935	32,270	30,440	32,209
Black and other races	4,280	5,326	6,143	6,156	5,819	5,673	6,276
White	28,211	31,218	32,594	32,799	26,450	24,767	25,934
Total in labor force							
Black and other races	2,361	2,699	3,100	3,382	3,287	3,405	NA
White	17,554	19,919	2,470	22,225	20,481	29,602	NA

SOURCE: Numbers for total population for 1970-1980 are from U.S. Bureau of Census (1982b). Projections for total population for 1985-2000 are from U.S. Bureau of Census (1982a). Actual and projected labor force is from *Employment and Training report of the President, 1982,* E Tables Series (1982).

Summary

Detailed examination of youth employment patterns reveal the following facts: (1) youth are unemployed at a much higher rate than adults; (2) youth unemployment is concentrated among those of minority race, those living in poverty areas and those with low educational attainment; (3) the majority of youth make a reasonably smooth transition from school to some kind of work; (4) approximately 20-25 percent of youth who are unemployed experience unemployment for fifteen weeks or longer; (5) high rates of youth unemployment have been present since the 1960s with rates increasing during the 1970s and 1980s; (6) the number of youths in the labor force will decline during the later 1980s and 1990s; however, the number of youths of minority race will decline at a much slower rate. Therefore, given the distribution of youth unemployment problems, youth unemployment is likely to remain an issue into the future.

As a strategy for vocational education, youth as a target population may be defined in various degrees of breadth. The widest scope is to consider the group at risk regarding employment problems to be *all youth*. The rationale is that vocational education's charge is to prepare all individuals in all communities who have interest in and can benefit from vocational education. A narrower definition would include all youth expected to enter the labor market. Here, focus would be on the education of those who have decided to work. Narrower still would be to focus on unemployed youth—those who will have some difficulty making the transition from school to work. The most

restrictive and "targeted" approach is to define those at risk as youth with extended periods of unemployment. Figure 1 shows the relative sizes of these various groups at risk regarding youth employment problems and their consequences.

A further delineation useful for vocational education consideration would be to divide the age group so that the groups at various degrees of risk are appropriate to vocational education's delivery system, that is secondary vocational education (through high school or area center) and post-secondary vocational education (through area vocational schools or community colleges). If so divided, the size of the groups at risk regarding youth unemployment for each level of vocational education in 1980 and projected to 1990 would appear as shown in table 5. Although the basic proportion of youth falling into each of these groups is somewhat predictable, much less can be said beforehand about which specific young people will have employment problems of various levels; this fact presents a dilemma to using vocational education only as a strategy to prevent extensive youth unemployment or somehow to target vocational education.

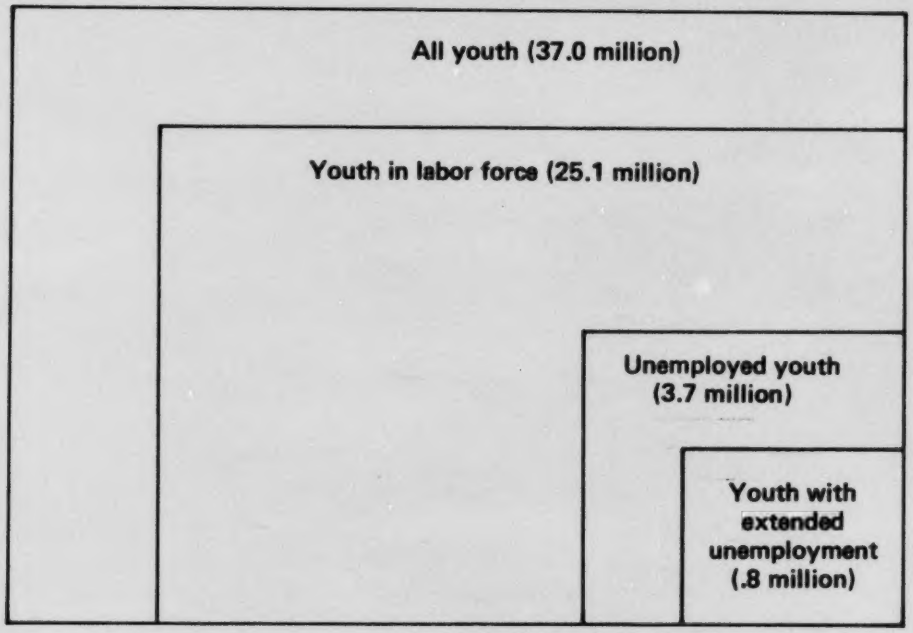
All youth (37.0 million)
Youth in labor force (25.1 million)
Unemployed youth (3.7 million)
Youth with extended unemployment (.8 million)

Figure 1. Size of groups at risk to youth employment problem, 1981.

TABLE 5

SIZE OF GROUP AT RISK FOR SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, 1981 AND 1990 (THOUSANDS)

Group at risk	Secondary		Postsecondary	
	1981	1990	1981	1990
All youth	16,208	13,540	20,827	17,953
Youth in labor force	8,988	8,189–8,852	16,099	13,710–15,064
Unemployed youth	1,763	?	1,976	?
Youth with extended unemployment (15 weeks or more per year	301	?	519	?

SOURCE: Adapted from *Employment and Training Report of the President,* A, B, and E Tables Series(1982).

NOTE: Assumes that the age group sixteen to nineteen is most appropriate for secondary programs and the age group twenty to twenty-four for postsecondary programs. In practice, high school dropouts and most of those age nineteen would more appropriately fit the postsecondary delivery system of vocational education.

CHAPTER 2

LIKELY CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

The attention given by vocational education to the youth employment problem as described above is partially dependent on the consequences of youth employment problems, almost all of which are assumed to be negative. Some authors such as Feldstein and Ellwood (1982) would argue that youth employment problems have some positive effects in teaching youth about the nature of the labor market and the consequences of their own inappropriate behaviors and low skills. Passmore (1982) completed a comprehensive review of literature of the costs of youth joblessness; the nature of the evidence he uncovered is summarized in table 6. He divided costs into social costs (borne by society as a whole) and private costs (borne by the individual youth who is unemployed). Social costs included lost output (because of idle human resources), increased federal expenditures (for transfer payments and services to the unemployed and/or their families), and changes in criminal behavior (increased crime rate). Private costs were categorized into reduced future employment and earnings and diminished health. Some of the findings he uncovered follow.

Social Costs

Lost Output

Although not specific to youth, each percentage point in the unemployment rate above 4 percent was associated with about 3 percent lower GNP (1947 to 1961) (Okun 1962). Fluctuations of the United States economy between 1953 and 1979 caused a forfeit of thousands of years of civilian employment opportunities, as well as a loss of $7.1 trillion from GNP and $1.8 trillion from public revenues (Keyserling 1979). During the last quarter of 1981, 9.5 percent of potential labor force time was lost (Household Data 1982). [However, Passmore (1982) reasons that joblessness does not cause the loss of output but rather, lower than potential output causes joblessness.]

Increased Federal Expenditures

Although not specific to youth, an increase in the unemployment rate from 5 percent to 6 percent increases regular unemployment compensation benefits by $1.8 million annually (Congress of the United States 1977b). A 1 percent increase in the rate of unemployment is associated with a 7 to 9 percent increase in the number of food stamp beneficiaries (Barth, et al., 1975; Congress of the United States 1977b). A 1 percent increase in the unemployment rate produces between 2.3 percent and 3.4 percent additional Aid For Dependent Children beneficiaries (Suarez 1975; Hollenbeck 1976). A 1 percent increase in the unemployment rate increases applications for Social Security Disability Income payments by 10 percent. A 1 percent increase in unemployment increases Medicare caseloads by 1.5 percent within nine to twelve months (Lando 1974; Hambor 1975). [Passmore (1983) points out that estimates of these federal expenditures specifically for *youth* joblessness are not available and would be difficult to derive.]

TABLE 6

EVIDENCE ON LIKELY CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

Consequences	Categories	Indicators
Social Costs	Lost outputs	Gross national product Public revenues Labor force time
	Increased federal expenditures	Unemployment compensation Food stamp beneficiaries AFDC beneficiaries SSDI payments Medicare caseload
	Increased criminal behavior	Death rate by homicide Arrests Narcotics violations
Private costs	Reduced future employment and earnings	Employment rate Weeks of employment
	Diminished health	Suicide rate Mental hosptial stays Anxiety level Subjective well-being Withdrawal and secrecy Distortion in perception of time Development of schizophrenia External locus of control Defensiveness and self-criticism Deterioration of personal and family relationships

SOURCE: This table was adapted from evidence described by Passmore (1983), pp. 11-29.

Increased Criminal Behavior

A 1 percent increase in the unemployment rate of fifteen to twenty-four year olds was associated with a 3.27 percent increase in deaths of young people by homicide, a 2.66 percent increase in the arrests of youth, and a 3.16 percent increase in arrests of youth for narcotics violations (Brenner 1980). [Passmore (1983) points out that studies linking youth unemployment and crime are faulty in their use of aggregate rather then individual data and in their use of associational rather than causal design.]

Private Costs

Reduced Future Employment and Earnings

An extra ten weeks of employment by a youth during one year was related to three weeks of additional employment during the next year; twenty-six weeks out of work during the first year after school was related to 12 percent lower wages ten years later (Ellwood 1982). The odds that a young woman worked in any year were eight times as great if she worked during a previous year; ten years after completing school, a woman who spent two years out of the labor force immediately after school earned 3 to 5 percent less in wages per hour than a woman who worked continuously (Concoran 1982). Ten hours of work per week as a high school senior was associated with an 11 percent increase in weeks worked following graduation and a 3 percent increase in weekly earnings; however, these associations did not persist five years after graduation (Meyer and Wise 1982). [Passmore (1983) points out the difficulty in these studies, even when using longitudinal data, of separating the effects of youth unemployment from effects simply caused by individual differences.]

Diminished Health

A 1 percent increase in the unemployment rate for fifteen to twenty-four year olds was associated with a 2.9 percent increase in youth suicides and a 12.2 percent increase in mental hospital residence among youth (Brenner, 1980). For the relationship of emotional well-being and joblessness over all ages, reports have suggested that unemployment elevates anxiety, lowers subjective well being, induces withdrawal and secrecy, distorts perception of time, is related to development of schizophrenia, is associated with greater external locus of control, elicits defensiveness and self-criticism, and contributes to deterioration of personal and family relationships. [Passmore's (1983) evaluation of these studies is that many of them lack scientific rigor and that other studies present conflicting evidence.]

Discussion of Cost Factors

Passmore (1983) is generally sceptical of the evidence available to document specifically the consequences of youth unemployment—not so much because the consequences might not exist but because formal research has not made them factually explicit. In terms of implications for policy on youth employment, he concludes, "Modest evidence is available that youth joblessness has consequences for subsequent employment. Associations of joblessness with federal expenditures, health and crime are hard to ignore, even though strong causal links between joblessness (especially among youths) and these factors have not been forged" (p. 20).

What is missing from the above analysis of the costs of youth unemployment is recognition of (1) the diversity among unemployed youth, (2) the complexity of youth employment, and (3) the subtle and subjective nature of consequences to youth unemployment (Snedaker 1982). First, although both would be classified as unemployed for the purposes of much of the above reported research, the individual youth themselves can vary from the upper-class, white, male, high school junior, age seventeen, living with parents as an only child, and looking for a part-time summer job but unwilling to consider anything less than working at the country club marina; to the black, male, high school dropout, age nineteen, head of household with two children and living with his grandmother in project housing. The consequences of youth unemployment for these two individuals are simply not the same. There are many gradients of youth characteristics between these two. Second, youth unemployment and its consequences rarely exist in direct serial order over short periods of time. Rather, the factors of family characteristics, inherited ability and characteristics, geographic location, peer cultures, nature of local community, quality of schooling, and state of the economy all interact in complex and unpredictable ways to impose consequences that themselves vary over time. Third, and most difficult to describe convincingly, but nevertheless somehow felt to exist after some close observation and pondering, are the subtle and more subjective consequences of youth unemployment not yet measured in the above statistics; the nervous idleness; lack of purpose; feeling of dependence, anger and hostility; and missed opportunities for growth.

Summary

In considering vocational education policy regarding youth employment, validity of available evidence of consequences and the suffering and loss created by these consequences must be weighed against the potential of vocational education to reduce these consequences at some cost. In theory, and ultimately in political and administrative practice, this ratio of expected benefits and costs should be compared to similar ratios for alternative foci for vocational education such as adult employment, increased productivity, defense preparedness, technological advancement, sex equity, educational excellence, and education for special needs students. It is not within the scope of this policy analysis to provide analysis and information for the latter mentioned alternative foci for federal policy on vocational education, but the question is raised to provide a context for consideration of consequences regarding youth employment and the response of vocational education policy. It is fully expected that the evidence to document the consequences of these other problems of potential focus for vocational education is fraught with as many gaps, limitations, and subjectivities as is the case for youth unemployment.

CHAPTER 3

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

Causation is an illusive concept when social phenomena are of concern. Rather, one is forced to talk in terms of *possible* causes based on observation of certain phenomena or characteristics that regularly appear together, or at least in some relationship, in terms of time and location. It is one thing to say that two occurences are conjoined (that is, they happen together) and quite another to show they are connected; for the connection in the social arena can never actually be observed, only hypothesized with various strengths of evidence. With youth employment, the evidence at this point as to possible causes is only observational and associational. It is highly probable that youth employment problems have multiple or compound causes.

Looking first at the causes of employment problems in general and unemployment in particular, Levin (1983) has enumerated the following commonly cited causes:

- Wage rigidities—Wages do not adjust downward in the labor market when labor supply exceeds demand because of factors such as minimum wage legislation and trade union power.
- Monopoly concentration of industry—A few large firms artificially restrict output, and thereby employment, in contrast to a more competitive situation.
- International barriers to trade—Distortions in employment levels are caused by tariffs, quotas, subsidies and exchange rates.
- Imperfect information—There is a lag in labor market response to changes in technology and market conditions created by lack of immediate information.
- Restrictive monetary policies—If the government inadequately expands the money supply, higher interest rates and unemployment will result (if money supply is expanded too much, the rate of inflation rises).
- Inadequate effective demand—Mature capitalist economies tend not to provide a level of market demand needed to employ all resources, including labor.

Within this wider context of unemployment, much work has been done on identifying the possible causes of youth unemployment (Copa 1980; Vice President's Task Force on Youth Employment 1980 a, b, c, and d; Ginzberg 1980; Freeman 1980; Barton and Frazer 1980; Passmore 1982; Congress of the United States, (Congressional Budget Office) 1980 a and b, 1982). The possible causes can be sorted into (1) those related to the demand side of the market,(2) those related to the supply side of the market, and (3) those related to the transition from not working to working (or working more or working in a different job). Each of these categories can in turn be subdivided into the following: (1) demand-side causes: size of demand, work requirements, and access to

demand; (2) supply-side causes: size of supply, work qualifications, and access to supply; and (3) transition causes: quantity and quality. This framework for viewing the possible causes of youth unemployment is shown in table 7, along with specific causes fitting each category. Following is a description of each possible cause.

Possible Demand-Side Causes

The possible causes listed in this category are inherent in the labor market and external to the young person seeking work. Treatment would mean focusing on changes in labor demand.

Size of Demand

Inadequate labor demand. Job vacancies are not available in sufficient number of the type for which young persons are prepared, nor are they in the same geographic location as unemployed youth. Youth looking for work simply outnumber job vacancies.

Work Requirements

Restructuring of labor demand. Restructuring involves changes in industrial mix, technology, and job length. The increase in the percentage of employment in service industries from manufacturing means generally fewer unskilled jobs. An increase in part-time, short duration jobs means a forced increase in job mobility and, therefore, an increase in the chances of periods of unemployment.

Unrealistic job requirements. Job requirements used for screening and selecting job applicants are above those required for actual successful performance of a job. Requirements may be stated in such forms as education, experience, licenses, and union membership.

Access to Demand

Successful competition from other groups. Older workers, migrants, or those previously unavailable for work (e.g., reentering females, military retirees, patients discharged from institutions) compete with unemployed youth and are more successful in entering or remaining at work. The size of the "otherwise unavailable" group has been increasing substantially in recent years.

Discrimination. Discrimination in hiring on the basis of age, which works to the disadvantage of all youth, or on the basis of sex or race affects particular subgroups of youth.

Restrictive laws and regulations. Laws and regulations related to hiring, such as the minimum wage legislation and the insurance requirements regarding age of workers can force employers to pay unrealistic wages for youth in relation to their productivity, can restrict employers from hiring youth for certain jobs, and can make employers wary of the legal risks of hiring youth.

TABLE 7
A FRAMEWORK FOR POSSIBLE CAUSES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Major Category	Sub-category	Specific Causes
Demand-side	Size of demand	Inadequate labor demand
	Work requirements	Restructuring of labor market Unrealistic job requirements
	Access to demand	Successful competition from other groups Discrimination Restrictive laws and regulations
Supply-side	Size of supply	Large number Increased labor force participation Lack of alternative uses of time Lack of consequences to not working Negative peer pressure School enrollment patterns Low labor force attachment Work in underground economy
	Work qualifications	Lack of education Lack of work experience Lack of information Poor attitude toward self and/or work
	Access to supply	Lack of resources Lack of support system Wrong geographic location and unwilling to relocate Competing roles
	Quantity of service	Nonexistence of service Insufficient quantity of service
Transition	Quality of service	Inadequate access to service Ineffective service Uncoordinated service

Possible Supply-Side Causes

The possible causes of youth unemployment posited in this category are inherent in the affected persons themselves. Amelioration would mean focusing on changing the characteristics and/or behavior of youth.

Size of Supply

Large numbers. During the 1960s, the increased population resulting from the baby boom began entering the labor force in much larger numbers than previously. The labor market recently has been forced to accommodate many more young workers.

Increasing labor force participation rates. More and more, youth are deciding they want to work for various reasons. Between 1956 and 1981, the labor force participation rates for youth increased from 57.5 to 67.9 percent for youth.

Lack of alternative uses of time. With the move to a volunteer military force and nonpassage of a national youth service opportunity program, the acceptable alternative ways in which youth could use their time (while not in school or working) have been reduced. The alternative most readily available is leisure activities, many of which are considered of questionable value by adults.

Lack of consequences of not working. A youth may want to work and may actually be searching for work but not be undergoing hardship while in the process. The youth may be living at home and receiving a substantial allowance from parents, or may be receiving welfare payments, both of which are disincentives to work at low paying jobs.

Negative peer pressures. A young person's friends can exert pressures as to the types of work that are acceptable. Peers form an important social referent group for youth.

School enrollment patterns. As more students pursue postsecondary education (these students are generally of higher ability), those left to go to work are of lower ability. Therefore, youths who wish to work may be less employable in relation to other groups, such as adults.

Low labor force attachment (high turnover rates). Youth are at a stage in their vocational development where they have a "naturally" high turnover rate because they are "shopping around" for jobs that meet their needs (which, in turn, are changing). If enrolled in school, they need a summer job during the summer and a part-time job, perhaps in a different geographic location, during the school year. Further, they may voluntarily change jobs frequently for a variety of reasons (e.g., to try something different, to work with friends, because they wish to leave labor market for a while, for better wages).

Work in "underground" economy. Some youths may find it much more profitable to deal in drugs and crime. Although risky, these occupations may be readily available in some locations and provide large, nontaxable incomes.

Work Qualifications

Lack of education. The education of an individual, as it relates to employment, can be subdivided into *general* and *specific-to-work*. General education refers to basic cognitive skills in areas

such as reading, speaking, mathematics, social studies, as well as physical (psychomotor) and interpersonal (affective) skills. These are skills that are generalizable and important to all of the roles played by a person in society (e.g., political, family, economic, leisure). The category of specific-to-work education refers to cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills that are useful primarily in the work role. These skills can again be subdivided into employability (seeking/coping), general work and specific work skills. Employability (seeking/coping) skills are those that are useful in obtaining, holding, and advancing in a work role of any kind. They include using labor market information, assessing one's capabilities and interests, making career decisions, and relating to supervisors and co-workers. General work skills are skills useful in the performance of several occupations (i.e., the more basic of the specific-to-work skills). Specific work skills are those useful in a single occupation. Work skills that are even more specific apply only to a particular work site, but such skills are usually taught on the job.

Lack of work experience. Experience is time spent working at paid or unpaid employment. Perhaps its importance comes as an indication of a person's likely performance in the real world of work. It is seen to provide some additional education beyond that which can be obtained inside the classroom or laboratory of the school.

Lack of information. The information lacking is about self, work environment, and means for making a successful transition to work. It could involve knowing such diverse information as one's vocational interests and aptitudes, the jobs that are presently vacant in a given community, or the education that is most suitable for entry into a particular occupation.

Poor attitude toward self and/or work. The person has low self-esteem, that is, does not feel capable of securing a job and then advancing in it. Or the person has a poor "work ethic," or does not see working as an important part of living, or perceives that the work available is not worth the effort. Some persons may have wage aspirations that are excessive in relation to what they can realistically produce.

Access to Supply

Lack of resources. The term *resources* refers to financial resources to purchase items, such as transportation, food, and clothing, while seeking work and becoming educated or established at work.

Lack of support systems. A support system is the personal support of family or friends who help an individual make it through the ups and downs of getting established in a work role. It entails the needed encouragement to "stay at it" and serves as a sounding board to solve problems, as a source of security necessary to independent action, and as a role model for normal behavior relating to working.

Wrong geographic location and unwilling to relocate. The person is living in a geographic location where jobs are not available at all or jobs for which the person is qualified are not available. The person is unwilling to move to increase the possibility of employment. There may be several legitimate reasons for not moving (e.g., family is not willing to move, individual is going to school).

Competing roles. The person has other roles that constrain the type of work that can be accepted. These other roles may involve school, family, or leisure activities in the person's life. It may be that the person is not interested in working or has other interests of stronger intensity.

Possible Transition Causes

The third category of possible causes of youth unemployment is inherent in the services of institutions and organizations that are to assist in the process of transition from school to work.

Quantity of Service

Nonexistence of services. The exact type of service needed may not be in existence anywhere; perhaps it has not even been developed or tested to the point of being operational. Or maybe the particular service has not been identified as being needed. Types of nonexistent services may include preparation for work, career guidance, job placement, and employer education.

Insufficient quantity of service. The service may be available but not in sufficient quantity to serve all youth needing assistance.

Quality of Service

Inadequate access to service. The service is not accessible to those who need it because of factors such as geographic location, costs, admission requirements, scheduling, or physical access.

Ineffective service. Services may be in existence and accessible but not effective. They do not diminish the problem they are designed, operated, and funded to affect.

Uncoordinated services. Service institutions and organizations do not provide for avoidance of unnecessary duplication and gaps in service. Individuals are not able to move from service to service in a smooth flow. Multiple needs are not taken care of with appropriate schedules and overall concern for individuals.

Relative Importance of Possible Causes

Multiple or compound possible causes have been posited for youth unemployment problems. Delimitation of all the specific causes within each major category of causal factors has not been accomplished by research and experience. Several of the possible causes can vary from "cause" to "not a cause," depending on circumstances or the intensity of manifestation. For example, when are services or practices such as career guidance, job training, or equity in hiring procedures ineffective *enough* to become a real cause of youth unemployment? Or how intense does negative peer pressure have to become to affect a young person's decision to take a particular job? The task of sorting out possible causes is even more difficult when causes are separated from the effect (youth unemployment) by time and space. For example, it may be four or more years from the time a ninth grader gets career guidance in selecting a set of high school courses to the time of an initial job search. Or students obtaining job training in one community may end up searching for work several hundred miles away.

Possible causes also act in a branched hierarchical network so they can be discussed in terms of primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. That is, the unemployment of a particular homogeneous group of youth may have a *primary* cause of "lack of education," which may in turn be caused by several possible causes such as poor instruction, wrong curriculum content, or poor student

attendance (termed *secondary* possible causes). Poor student attendance may in turn be caused by poor health, lack of transportation, or family obligations (*tertiary* possible causes).

Therefore, it becomes important to document the conditions under which each possible cause is likely to be a real "contender" for fostering youth unemployment. The task of identifying the actual cause(s) of unemployment for a particular youth becomes one of considering all possible causes, determining whether the possible cause was present for the youth in question, and then determining if the cause was operating as would normally be expected.

There have been concerted efforts to untangle the phenomenon of youth unemployment by trying to identify which causes are the most important (in terms of frequency and consequences) and thereby merit most attention by institutions providing vocational education. The assessment of the importance of possible causes of youth unemployment is perhaps most insightful if separated into two issues: (1) relative importance of possible causes of the *size of youth unemployment* and (2) relative importance of possible causes of *the distribution of youth unemployment*. The tentative results of reviewing studies relating to these two issues are shown in tables 8 and 9.

Looking first at the size of youth unemployment, the most important possible cause is *size of demand*. Freeman (1980) concludes his analysis of youth unemployment causes by stating, "A strong case can be made that lack of jobs is a major contributor to youth joblessness" (p. 21). Also, he concludes that studies of unemployed youth have found that "virtually no unemployed young job seekers report having rejected a job offer during the period of search" (p. 20). Lack of jobs in the economy is substantial. Abraham (1982a and b) investigated the relationship between number of job vacancies and the number of individuals looking for work in the U.S. economy. She found that the number of vacancies has typically been much lower than the number of individuals looking for work since the mid-1960s. In 1982, she estimated that the number of unemployed persons exceeded the number of vacant jobs by a *factor of ten or more*.

The other possible causes of youth employment problems are judged to be of "some" importance to the size of youth unemployment. Among these causes, several have been given particular attention in recent analyses.

For example, the specific causes related to the size of supply category have been found to be relatively more important in determining the size of youth unemployment. Although the U.S. economy has not been hostile to youth (in the sense that it has absorbed most of a very large number), at a rate increasing substantially each year during the 1960s and 1970s (see table 3), it has not kept up with the demand for jobs, particularly during cyclical downturns in economic conditions. Except for members of minority groups, the pressure of this increase in numbers will reduce during the late 1980s.

In addition to numbers of youth, another specific cause affecting the size of supply is the nature of the way youth enter the labor force in the United States—specifically, the low labor force attachments and high turnover rates. Freeman (1980) concludes, "One of the key factors behind youth joblessness is the high mobility and short tenure of youth" (p. 19). His analysis shows that most of the difference in unemployment rates for youth and adults was due to the "difference in the percentage of persons who experience unemployment over the year rather than to differences in spells per person or in the length of spells" (p. 17). A major reason related to the higher percentage of youth experiencing unemployment is that a much larger percentage are new entrants or reentrants to the labor force—a transition that in the United States often invokes a period of unemployment.

TABLE 8

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF POSSIBLE CAUSES OF THE SIZE OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Major Category	Subcategory	Relative Importance
Demand-side	Size of demand	High
	Work requirements	Some
	Access to demand	Some
Supply-side	Size of supply	Some
	Work qualifications	Some
Transition	Quantity	Some
	Quality	Some

TABLE 9

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF POSSIBLE CAUSES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Major Category	Subcategory	Relative Importance
Demand-side	Size of demand	Some
	Work requirements	Some
	Access to demand	Some
Supply-side	Size of supply	Some
	Work qualifications	High
	Access to supply	High
Transition	Quantity	Some
	Quality	Some

The less than sufficient labor market demand, the increased number and labor force participation rate of youth, and the higher turnover rate have been suggested as the most important possible causes of high youth unemployment rates. Other possible causes, shown in table 8, have also been assessed as to their importance (Freeman 1982; Passmore 1982) and have been shown to be significant, but somewhat less so, in affecting the overall rate of youth unemployment.

Concerning some of the other possible specific causes of youth unemployment, Passmore's (1982) review suggests the following:

- The increase in the number of youth is related to the high rate of youth unemployment but does not explain the disproportionately high unemployment rate of nonwhite youth.
- Youth unemployment caused by lack of skills affects only those who are associated with structural rather than cyclical unemployment.
- Competition for jobs among youths, illegal aliens, and adult women is a factor that must be taken seriously.
- Evidence of lack of work commitment by youth is weak.
- The minimum wage has a small negative effect on youth employment but this effect is being reduced by legislation that allows 15 percent less than minimum wage to be paid to youth during an initial entry period, and by the fact that 15 percent of the work force is employed in industries not covered by the minimum wage.
- The rationale for the reluctance of employers to hire youth and particularly black youth is not clear.
- Legal barriers in the form of laws and regulations do constrain employment opportunities for youth (some were intended to protect young people and others to restrict their supply).
- There is little evidence to support the hypothesis of the mismatch of youth residence and job location as a major cause of youth unemployment.

Evidence relating to transition factors as a cause is similarly moderate in its claims being relatively important to high rates of youth unemployment. For example, the latest Congressional Budget Office study (Congress of the United States 1982) focusing on youth employment, entitled *Improving Youth Employment Prospects: Issues and Options*, cites transitional services, with respect to placement activities, as an important possible cause of youth unemployment. The point made is that youth employment involves a period of initial unemployment before a job is found because it is often a new entry or reentry. During the 1960s, the U.S. Employment Service reduced its placement activities in senior high schools, with a shift of focus to disadvantaged adults and out-of-school youth. Therefore, this lack of service may be an important factor related to youth unemployment for teenagers. Concerning another transitional service, vocational education, the American Vocational Association in congressional testimony has stated that inner cities of large metropolitan areas and the sparsely populated rural areas are the least likely (compared to other geographic areas) to have adequate instructional capacity in terms of ratio of instructional stations to population size (Bottoms 1983; Woodruff 1978).

Turning next to the question of the distribution of unemployment among unemployed youth, the most important possible causes appear to be on the supply side of the labor market. Youth, particularly those who are more likely to be unemployed, frequently lack qualifications (e.g., high school diploma, work experience, information) and a support system (e.g., enough money, stable family, available transportation). However, the evidence is far from clear that these factors are the most important causes of the distribution of youth unemployment.

Summary

As with the data on the consequences of youth employment problems, the evidence for causes is characterized by gaps and limitations. Yet some major conclusions seem to have ample evidence.

First, youth unemployment has *multiple causes* and there is little evidence that the causes can be reduced to one or two causes as a focus for federal policy. To assume otherwise is to oversimplify the nature of youth employment problems. However, some discriminations among causes seem to be apparent, if the question focuses more specifically on the overall size of youth unemployment and its distribution among youth.

Second, in regard to the more specific question of the size of youth unemployment, the most important cause appears to be lack of jobs in comparison to the number of people wanting and able to work. Without enough jobs to go around, the resulting question is really who should be unemployed: youth, adults, males, females, college graduates, high school dropouts, those living in the North or South? Without enough jobs, most of the impact of an educational program (such as vocational education) or other transitional service is reduced to helping ensure that all jobs are filled and that unemployment is somehow equitably distributed using whatever criteria might seem appropriate. For example, if productivity were the criterion, then among individuals of the same productivity, unemployment ought to be randomly distributed.

Third, the large increase in the number of youth has compounded the effects of lack of jobs in affecting the size of unemployment. The economy has absorbed most of a very large number of youth, but it has not kept up with the demand for jobs.

Fourth, another more important reason for the high rate of unemployment for youth as compared to adults is the larger percentage of youth who experience unemployment as new entrants and reentrants. This "entry" period of unemployment is a characteristic of the U.S. labor market.

Fifth, supply-side causes relating to deterioration of social institutions such as family, school, and community, particularly in inner cities, are related to increased likelihood of youth employment problems, especially for minority youth since they are concentrated in these areas. Without family support and encouragement, with poor-quality education, with enticement to become involved in drugs and crime, without a resume describing work experience, and with less access to services such as vocational education, youth in inner cities have a greater potential for youth employment problems. Ready access to sufficient, high-quality vocational education with needed support services has a real potential for impact in this context.

CHAPTER 4

COMPONENTS OF A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Given a sense of possible causes of youth employment problems, it is logical to think of appropriate means to address these causes. As in the discussion of possible causes, the likely "cures" for youth unemployment might first be thought of in the context of unemployment in general. Turning again to Levin (1983), the following cures are most often suggested for dealing with unemployment:

- Improving the functioning of labor markets, that is, making them function more like perfectly competitive markets by the following procedures:
  - Reducing wage rigidities
  - Reducing monopoly concentration
  - Reducing international barriers to trade
  - Improving information
- Reducing/altering the supply of workers, that is, reducing the number of people who want to work or making them more employable:
  - Enacting education and training policies
  - Reducing population growth
  - Reducing immigration
  - Increasing compulsory schooling
  - Increasing armed forces
  - Increasing taxes on labor earnings
  - Lowering retirement age
  - Raising entry age for child labor
- Increasing the demand for workers, that is, increasing the number of jobs by using the following policies:
  - Expanding monetary policy
  - Expanding fiscal policy
  - Subsidizing wages
  - Subsidizing industry
  - Mandating staffing ratios
  - Expanding government employment
  - Promoting labor intensive enterprises
  - Reducing plant closings

Within this more general context, this section describes necessary components of a comprehensive portfolio of services more focused on reducing *youth employment problems* through

employment-related education and training policy (major strategies that increase labor demand are excluded). Taggart (1981) has referred to these as the "building blocks" of a youth employment program. The suggested services are *not usually thought of as alternatives* in the sense of being substitutes for one another. They may work on different possible causes of youth unemployment and are needed in combination; no one service is sufficient by itself. The services are drawn from a review of studies and testimony concerning the services needed to deal with youth employment problems. Particularly helpful were Barton and Frazer (1980); Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office (1978, 1980 a and b, 1982b); Copa (1980); Ginsberg (1980); Levitan and Mangum (1981); Mangum and Walsh (1978); Marshall (forthcoming); National Commission on Employment Policy (1979a); National Manpower Institute (1978a and b); Osterman (1980); Taggart (1981, 1982, 1983); and Vice President's Task Force on Youth Employment (1980 all). Concern focuses on both the "flow" and "pool" of unemployed youth, that is, on those who are predicted to become unemployed youth some time in the future and those already unemployed.

Services Directed toward Promoting Youth Employment

The services proposed to form a comprehensive portfolio are first categorized into five major components, as shown in table 10: access, education, information, transition, and work experience. Each major component is described in terms of its specific service components. What follows is a more complete description of these specific service components.

Access-related Services

Outreach. Outreach involves making *all* mbers of a community, in this case particularly the youth already or potentially unemployed, aware of the services (e.g., education, placement, support) available to alter their condition. Outreach is not only providing information but seeing that it is received and understood. Outreach could occur in many places (e.g., home, school, shopping center, amusement park, church) and many times through a variety of media (e.g., printed, radio, television, personal communication).

Recruitment. Recruitment goes beyond outreach. Here, the intent is to intervene *actively* to ensure that those in need of service receive it. For example, if occupational training is needed by particular individuals, several active means might be used to enroll them in a service such as vocational education. The intent is not to wait passively for youth in need of service to enroll on their own.

Assessment. Assessment pertains to assisting youth to see their own needs, abilities, and interests, as well as providing this information to those who provide appropriate services. It involves development of valid and fair procedures for testing and communicating the results of assessment to youth and others who need the information.

Guidance. Guidance services help youth make better decisions about preparing for and actually making the transition from school to stable careers. It could involve guidance related to education (both high school and post-high school), job, personal matters and family as they affect transition to and maintenance of a work role.

TABLE 10
COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Major Components	Specific Components
Access-related services	Outreach Recruitment Assessment Guidance
Education-related services	General education Job readiness or employability training Skill training
Information-related services	Education information Labor market information
Transition-related services	Age integration Role model development Testing, accreditation, and licensing Job placement Community involvement Laws and regulations Geographic relocation Alternatives to work Coordination of services
Work-experience-related services	Work experience Job development

Education-related Services

General education. General education services seek to improve the more generalizable skills of youth that may be useful in several different life roles. All of the generalizable skills interact and affect success in a work role. Areas needing improvement include strengthening basic skills (e.g., mathematics, reading, speaking), understanding the nature of industry, developing appreciation for culture, leadership skills, and refining human relations. Some of the effort expended may be characterized as remedial for skills that should have been but were not learned in other educational experiences.

Employability or job readiness training. Employability (job readiness) training involves teaching the skills necessary to seek work and cope in the labor market. It involves the more general skills used in a work role such as making career decisions, practicing interviewing techniques, using sources of job vacancies, relating to employers and co-workers, and advancing in the same job or to another job.

Skill training. Skill training is the process of preparing youth for work by providing education in cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills directly related to and most useful in work roles. Training could take place in institutions (public and private, residential and non-residential), on the job, or in some combination of the two (cooperative work experience, apprenticeship).

Information-related Services

Labor market information. Using labor market information as a potential cure for youth employment problems primarily emphasizes services that communicate the characteristics of the labor market to youth and employment related institutions serving youth. Secondarily, this service could entail actual gathering or stimulating others to gather and communicate information that is needed but not available. Characteristics of the labor market include a wide variety of descriptions such as current job vacancies, future estimates of of vacancies, location of jobs, wages, working conditions, job entry requirements, advancement possibilities and so on. This information should be of use in providing effective guidance, instruction and placement.

Education information. Similar to the process of disseminating labor market information, information about educational processes available to prepare persons for work could be provided to youth, educational institutions, and employers. Characteristics of the educational process might include type of occupation, training requirements, cost, length, likelihood of trainees getting a job for which trained, location, and qualifications of staff. The information should serve to make youth aware of their educational options and the consequences of selecting an option; to inform deliverers of educational services of duplication and gaps (areas for reduction, expansion, or coordination); and to educate employers about what to expect from someone who has received educational services of a particular kind.

Transition-related Services

Age integration. Age integration involves providing opportunities for youth to come closely into contact with persons of all ages. Integration of this sort allows youth to observe, question, and develop perspectives of the various stages from the career development process to retirement. It develops an understanding of how various forces interact and why things happen as they do and provides a sense of control over or security in the work environment.

Role model development. Role model development is creating and communicating "success images" to youth. It involves providing them the opportunity to come into contact with and be influenced by individuals who can serve as concrete examples of desired performance in a work role. Successful images could be especially useful as mentors for youth in how to act, operate, and advance in a work role.

Testing, credentialing, and licensing. Testing, credentialing, and licensing are the special requirements for obtaining certain occupations and educational goals (e.g., license for practical nurse, acceptance in carpenters union, diploma for high school graduation). Service to youth relating to these requirements could include checking the validity and fairness of the testing, credentialing, and licensing procedures; recommending changes, if necessary; and assisting youth to meet these standards.

Job placement. Job placement would involve directly helping young people find suitable jobs. The notion of matching is involved, but in the dynamic sense both individual and job are likely to

be constantly changing in characteristics. Placement is therefore a continuous rather than a one-time service. Placement services might include developing a bank of information about present and future job vacancies and current and potential young job candidates, particularly those likely to be or become unemployed. The bank could contain both quantitative and qualitative data that would be visible to both youth and employers. Placement services would need to be accessible in time, place, and cost to meet the needs of youth. Placement involves the physical linking of an individual to a suitable work role.

Support services. Support services are supplementary assistance needed to prepare for and make the school-to-work transition. Support could mean assistance in room and board; clothing; and medical, dental, and legal help; as well as follow-up monitoring after the transition to work has been made. Support services could also encompass the social and psychological reinforcement necessary to find and maintain a job.

Community involvement. Community involvement includes the participation of youth, the staff of those organizations and institutions serving youth relative to the work role, those supporting the costs of services, and those hiring youth in making the transition to work a meaningful experience. The process makes members of a community aware of how they can facilitate this process and benefit from it.

Laws and regulations. Laws and regulations focus on the work role and address such issues as discrimination, minimum wage and occupational safety requirements. Context or place of impact of most concern for laws and regulations would be in schools, unions, and employment sites. Service with respect to laws and regulations would include informing youth and employers of rights and responsibilities, becoming active in changing undesirable laws and regulations, and directing attention to organizations and institutions that are not implementing existing laws and regulations.

Geographic relocation. Relocation is assisting youth in moving from areas of relative job deficiency to areas of job surplus.

Alternatives to work. Stress on developing alternative personally and socially rewarding roles outside work would serve to reduce the number of youth who want to work in the first place. Alternative roles might include caring for family, volunteering, or engaging in leisure activities.

Coordination of services. Coordination of services involves linking together all of the institutions and agencies assisting youth in the transition to stable employment. Major institutions and agencies involved would include the total high school program (including vocational education), employment services, and business and industry. The linking could be formalized by one agency or a joint group designated to monitor coordinative activities.

Work-Experience-related Services

Work experience. Work-experience-related services provide youth with experience in work roles useful in the transition to a suitable career. Experience might include paid and unpaid experience; it could come before, during, or after participation in school. Experience could be obtained through activities such as shadowing (spending some time with those working at particular jobs or groups of jobs); supervised occupational experience programs (usually provided while students are going to school with supervision by a professional who ensures that it is an effective and efficient educational experience); internships (usually full-time work experience before, during, or after classroom instruction with less supervision by professionals), and transitional employment (some kind of meaningful work during time of moving from school to stable, desired work role).

Job development. Job development is stimulating the creation of new labor force demand. Additional work roles could be stimulated by manipulating the economy or by directly creating jobs. Jobs could be created by either the public or private sector; particular geographic areas and industrial sectors may be targeted for economic stimulation. A shift from less to more labor-intensive methods of production could be an option. Schools could be involved in job creation by actually operating small businesses. Another important service that is part of job development is job redesign—the changing of job descriptions to create more satisfying work roles, and/or subdividing jobs, for example, creating two part-time jobs from one full-time job.

Summary

The above services represent a set of options or alternatives that could be deployed singly or in combination to reduce youth employment problems. Several service alternatives are focused on specific potential causes of employment problems, as enumerated in the preceding discussion. In developing and selecting appropriate services, care must be taken to avoid creating a bigger problem than is being solved. For example, reducing the minimum wage for youth may lead to much higher unemployment rates for adults as youth are substituted for them or large numbers of youth are employed at sub-level incomes. An understanding of the dynamic and interactive natures of the labor market and the transition from school to work raises speculation that services may have multiple consequences and that little can be absolutely guaranteed.

Making Services Specific to Vocational Education

In order to make the definition of each service designed to reduce youth employment problems more specific and meaningful to a discussion of vocational education policy and youth unemployment, illustrative example activities are posited for vocational education. The proposed activities were selected from past and present descriptions of vocational education (i.e., activities vocational education has included or is currently including) and from emerging positions about what vocational education has the inherent capacity to do. The activities suggested in table 11 are meant to be a sample for illustrative purposes. Activities of an even more specific nature could certainly be identified and described through a wide-ranging interaction with those familiar with and/or practicing vocational education. A more comprehensive listing would be a valuable thesaurus for planning and delivering vocational education to youth in a manner that is responsive to youth employment problems.

TABLE 11
ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES APPROPRIATE TO EACH YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROBLEM SERVICE COMPONENT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Service	Illustrative Activities
Outreach	• Provide media presentations explaining benefits and availability of guidance, training and cooperative work experience services.
	• Develop rapport with potential referral agencies (i.e., welfare, police, employment service, community action groups).
Recruitment	• Hire special staff who can communicate with unemployed youth and encourage use of services.
	• Provide financial incentives for enrolling in training programs.
	• Make training a component of job placement by all public agencies when appropriate.
Assessment	• Provide assessment services in vocational education institutions.
	• Use vocational educators as members of assessment teams.
	• Use facilities and equipment in vocational education program as place of assessment. Use performance on sample of tasks taught in vocational education programs as the assessment device or procedure.
	• Use assessment results to tailor instructional content and method to individual characteristics.
Guidance	• Serve as mentor or "influential other" for young persons.
	• Provide guidance assistance on matters related to education, employment, family, and other personal matters.
	• Assist individuals in occupational exploration involving skills at assessing occupations and self and making career-related decisions.
	• Serve as catalyst to bring together young person, parents, and employer to focus on the education and career development of the young person.
General education	• Provide opportunity to learn leadership and human relations skills through activities such as vocational education youth organizations.
	• Demonstrate that vocational education is part of a total, comprehensive educational program and institution.

TABLE 11—Continued

Service	Illustrative Activities
	• Make explicit the general utility of skills learned in vocational education and the dependence of more specific occupational skills on the basic skills, such as reading, writing and mathematics. Emphasizes that vocational education can be a new context in which to apply the more basic skills and to make the learning of basic skills more relevant.
Job readiness	• Add to all vocational education programs instruction related to interviewing techniques, using sources of job vacancies, relating to employers and co-workers, and on the job advancing.
	• Teach special courses in job readiness at appropriate times and places (i.e., evenings, summers, on weekends, via television, in recreation centers).
	• Provide "hand-holding" services during times when young persons are experiencing the trauma of seeking and advancing in an occupation; would require "one-to-one" help and "on-call" readiness.
Skill training	• Provide high-quality instruction that is accessible to all youth.
	• Personalize instruction to avoid duplication or gaps in learning and to fit the learning style of the student.
	• Provide instruction for occupations that are in demand and that have good possibilities for advancement.
Labor market	• Integrate information about the labor market and information sources of such information into all vocational education programs.
	• Stimulate those gathering labor market information to collect and report new information that is not available.
	• Provide accurate information to youth and other educational agencies about the impact of vocational education on labor market supply.
Education	• Incorporate in vocational education programs information about further or alternative educational programs available to prepare persons for work.
	• Share information with other educational agencies and institutions to make each aware of mission, duplication, and gaps in programs; this process is often referred to as *articulation*.

TABLE 11—Continued

Service	Illustrative Activities
	• Inform employers of what to expect from someone who has graduated from a vocational education program.
Age	• Provide opportunities for youth to interact with younger and older persons, particularly in relation to the work environment and work roles. This could be done by using resource persons in the classroom and the cooperative work experience programs and through community development/service activities.
	• Become involved in providing learning activities to the full range of age groups in our population from prekindergarten to the elderly.
Role model development	• Be a "success image" or "role model" for youth on how to develop a career.
	• Provide youth the opportunity to interact closely with others from a wide variety of occupations who can serve as "success images."
	• Use peer-teaching techniques in order to help young persons learn positive role models from one another.
Testing, credentialing, and licensing	• Provide educational experiences that will allow youth to pass testing, credentialing, or licensing requirements for occupations of their interest.
	• Examine the validity of testing, credentialing, or licensing requirements or examining procedures and take initiative in securing revisions where necessary.
	• Become accepted as a testing, credentialing, or licensing institution.
Job placement	• Identify and develop job opportunities for youth in vocational education programs; this may require visiting employers in the area and developing personal rapport.
	• Be available to help present or past students, as well as other youth, secure meaningful jobs; availability means being accessible in time, place, cost, and kinds of needs.
	• Follow up on job placements to assist youth in making adjustments or deciding to move to other jobs.
	• Make students aware of and coordinate services with the state employment service.

TABLE 11—Continued

Service	Illustrative Activities
Support services	• Make youth aware of services available to provide needed assistance in areas such as room and board, clothing, health care, child care, transportation, and legal advice.
	• Provide social and psychological support to youth during the periods of training, job search, initial job maintenance, or transition.
	• Provide support services for youth where appropriate by integrating an instructional and support service in a vocational education program (i.e., child-care service in child-care occupations program, food service in food occupations program, personal service in a cosmetology program).
Community involvement	• Develop joint ventures of the school and community for improving the community and providing training and work experience for young persons.
	• Require the use of advisory committees for all vocational education programs to assist in making instruction relevant, efficient, and recognized by the community.
	• Use the community as a teaching resource.
Laws and regulations	• Make students and employers aware of the laws and regulations governing the employment of young persons.
	• Examine the impact of laws and regulations on youth employment and initiate changes where needed.
Geographic relocation	• Locate vocational education programs to make them accessible to youth and yet to facilitate the movement of youth to areas of employment opportunity.
	• Take initiative in getting desired new industries to move to areas of low youth employment opportunities.
Alternative to work	• Make youth aware of alternative yet meaningful roles other than paid work; these roles might include family care and volunteering activities.
Coordination of services	• Provide leadership in establishing working linkages between agencies and institutions concerned with career development for youth.

TABLE 11—Continued

Service	Illustrative Activities
	• Become aware of other agencies and institutions providing services designed to prevent or remedy youth unemployment; make these other organizations aware of the service capabilities of vocational education.
Occupational experiences	• Provide opportunity for youth to shadow workers in their jobs for a period of observation.
	• Require all young vocational education students to have a supervised occupational experience program; use a training agreement to plan and manage the experiences with the student, parents, and employers.
	• Assist students in obtaining a meaningful transition to work after leaving school; a first job opportunity can be presented as an additional educational opportunity.
	• Provide simulated work environments in vocational education programs through operation of "model" businesses, laboratory, teaching, and community service activities.
Job development	• Use job analyses prepared for guidance in developing curriculum for employers to use in improving their jobs regarding worker satisfaction, opportunity for advancement, and realistic entry requirements.
	• Develop rapport with employers to influence labor market demands appropriate for youth.
	• Create jobs with the school, providing model businesses in which students are employed, thus operating the enterprise and participating in the management.
	• Create jobs through community improvement/development activities in which the school and community have formed a partnership and students are hired to carry out the improvement activities.
	• Support the maintenance and creation of jobs by providing adult vocational education courses focused on small-business management.
	• Integrate the learning of entrepreneurial skills into all vocational education programs as a means of providing additional employment opportunities.

Relating Services to Possible Causes

One way to select a strategy for vocational education as it relates to youth employment policy is to contemplate the likely effects of various service components on various potential causes of youth employment problems. Conceptually this effort can be depicted as in figure 2. Essentially the figure represents a cross impact matrix relating possible services to possible causes. The intersections of rows (causes) and columns (services) could be used to record a judgment of the likelihood that a particular service will ameliorate a particular cause. Estimates of the cost and feasibility of implementing the service to remedy the possible causes could also be recorded.

Based on analysis of past experiences of education and employment and training programs in terms of providing services to address possible unemployment causes, the impact matrix has been tentatively completed by the author with information regarding the likelihood that a service will impact on a possible cause.

A completed matrix showing costs and benefits of each interaction of service and possible causes is not yet available. However, the lessons of past policy concerning transition from school to work programs are beginning to form a mosiac, or pattern, which can provide direction to future policy. Filling out this mosaic is the intent of the next section of this paper.

Lessons from Past Employment-related Education and Training Policy

It is a challenging task to look across the many findings of past experiences with federal employment-related training and education policy designed to reduce youth employment problems, as described in table 11. The synthesis that follows is tailored to the purpose of this policy analysis paper: determining vocational education's role in reducing youth employment problems. The tailoring is accomplished first by specifically focusing the analysis on studies of the effects of vocational education and other employment-related training efforts of the federal government. Second, the synthesis is tailored by organizing the results of analysis in terms of the major service components shown in table 10. The synthesis attempts to highlight what is known about the effectiveness, feasibility, and cost of the relationship between major service components and possible causes of youth employment problems as depicted in figure 2. The sources of the following statements are shown in the Appendix by publishing agency.

About All Service Components

Research has highlighted several factors impacting on vocational education and its relation to youth employment:

- Youth employability is a critical federal domestic issue. The federal government should take the lead in improving youth employment services; however, substantial responsibilities should be left to state and local concerns.

- Federal policy concerning youth employment should further federal interests, whatever they may be (e.g., equality of opportunity, increase in productivity).

Possible Causes	Major Service Components				
	Access	Education	Information	Transition	Work Experience
Demand-side					
Size of demand		+	+	+	+
Work requirements		+	+	+	+
Access to demand	+	+	+	+	+
Supply-side					
Size of supply	++	+	++	+	+
Work qualifications	+	++	++	+	++
Access to supply	++	+	++	++	+

NOTE: + indicates some likely impact of service on cause; ++ indicates very likely impact.

Figure 2. Relation of services to possible causes of youth employment problems.

- Federal resources should be used more for improvement and innovation of programs than for program maintenance; the federal government should stimulate states to increase their expenditures to resolve youth employment problems.
- Federal resources should be targeted on geographic areas with low-income families and high unemployment rates.
- Predictability of which teenagers will have persistent employment problems is difficult to do accurately, however, the probability is higher for those of minority race, high school dropouts, and individuals with records of long-term unemployment. This characteristic presents a problem when designing and targeting prevention strategies (i.e., vocational education).
- The basic problem in delivering services is not in identifying programs that work but in replicating effective programs in new locations.
- Substantial gains in employability for disadvantaged youth are possible when they are offered a combination of services. However, although every type of service is of some use, nothing by itself has resulted in substantial reductions in youth unemployment.
- The major service components should be included in any plan to reduce youth employment problems; they are all necessary. The policy issue is one of appropriate mix, focus, and delivery. Youth employment problems are too complex to be addressed by a single institution or initiative.

- The successful transition from school to work by youth is a developmental process. This quality implies (1) a different mix of services for different phases; (2) flexibility in service delivery, since individual youth progress through developmental phases at different rates; (3) coordination between various service providers for youth at a particular developmental phase; and (4) continuity in services over a multiyear period—for some, the full eight-year period.

About Access-related Services

A survey of research data reveals several aspects of access-related services.

- Youth employment services can be effective even with those of low achievement and low socioeconomic status.

- Outreach services are overrated in terms of how much they are needed; this condition may change if new youth employment programs are introduced or existing programs changed.

- Assessment is necessary as long as there are more potential participants than service openings and a variety of services are available (with limited resources to provide them).

- Counseling is a useful component of youth employment services when it is focused on employment-related issues.

About Education-related Services

Services meeting educational needs have received attention in many studies. Several findings are germane to the study of youth employment.

- The economic structure of the U.S. economy is shifting from manufacturing to service. Although some service jobs require very little knowledge, on average, the shift to services is likely to require more education of employees.

- Although there is agreement that jobs are changing because of technological innovations, there is little agreement on the nature of these changes over the next twenty years. For some jobs, this situation will mean an increase in knowledge requirements; others will be broken into discrete, routine components requiring little thought. The advice to education is to stay in close touch with employers and build a capacity to be flexible and adaptive to change.

- There is a direct relationship between unemployment and lack of education.

- The largest share of federal educational funds for youth are untargeted and come from the vocational education basic grant to states. Federal educational expenditure for youth per participant is fairly low, about forty dollars per student in 1981. Even of this small amount, some of the funds may substitute for state and local expenditures. Federal vocational education policy has been criticized as attempting too much with too little resources, mismatching the ends and means for its initiatives, and not recognizing that its success depends on state and local cooperation.

- There is great diversity in the participation in and subsequent effects of vocational education. Vocational education is a very diverse and decentralized enterprise in the United States.

- The *outcomes* of participating in vocational education are not certain because of data limitations and the difficult nature of this evaluation problem. For a more limited concept of *effects*, it can be said that some programs are effective for some students on some measures. The overall employment-related effects of secondary vocational education are modest in comparison to the effects of sex, race, and socioeconomic status. Secondary vocational education has a small effect on reducing dropouts (perhaps because it comes too late in the curriculum). Students in secondary vocational education have about the same basic skill attainment as general curriculum students. However, fewer vocational education students go on to further schooling than general curriculum students after high school graduation. The employment-related effects of postsecondary vocational education appear more substantial and consistent. Vocational education graduates are judged by employers to require less on-the-job training and are more productive from the beginning of employment. Manufacturers prefer vocational education gaduates for jobs requiring less than a four-year degree by a rate of 85 percent. Manufacturers would prefer high school programs to teach both employability and specific job skills. State legislators view vocational education as particularly good at teaching job skills, career awareness, and good work habits.

- Almost 80 percent of high school students take some vocational education courses. However, only 11 percent can be called concentrators (that is, students who elect to take more than six credits in a specific field). Increased participation in secondary vocational education would most likely result in modest improvements in productivity and a narrowing of income differentials for males and females and various racial groups. The effects of secondary vocational education should be viewed in the context of the effects of all secondary education.

- Higher placement rates in secondary vocational education programs are related to (1) placement as an agreed-upon purpose of secondary vocational education by administration and staff, (2) entry restricted to students with high interest and potential, (3) staff that is enthusiastic about and responsible for placing students, (4) teachers who have regular contact with employers regarding placement, (5) students who participate in youth organizations, (6) students who are provided basic education skills and job-readiness skills, (7) staff that resembles the racial balance of the community served, (8) availability of transportation to jobs, and (9) curriculum oriented to the needs of employers.

- Within educational components, basic skills in communication, comprehension and computation may be the most severe barrier for a high percentage of those most prone to employment problems. Basic academic skills are said to be closely related to success in the workplace. However, among whites, basic skills attainment has not been found to be closely related to employment status or earnings of high school graduates.

- Institutional job training appears to be cost-effective, but it is often concentrated on low-level, high-turnover occupations and segregated by student body and facilities. Training should only be provided for occupations that are in demand and normally require training for entry. Disadvantaged youth with appropriate support services should be involved with advantaged youth in attractive and respected training institutions. The best training practices available should be incorporated if public sponsored training is to be competitive with other sources.

- Training must be linked with aggressive placement services and preferably with guaranteed employment for the most prone to employment problems.

- For those lacking basic skills, the basic academic component of education must take priority. After basics, career exploration, job search skills, and placement services are important. Vocational education has *not* been helpful in remedial efforts through CETA because participants did not have the basic skills to benefit from vocational education and because of the short duration in these programs. Interventions providing remedial education and employability skills have been quite effective in subsequent labor market success.

- Competency attainment in educational programs must be benchmarked to provide individual incentives, prescribe services, document performance to employers, and assess the attainment of individual participants.

- The school-to-work transition is a very unstable period; therefore, emphasis on more transferable competencies may be most effective.

- Vocational education is very good at many of the activities needed to deal with youth employment problems (e.g., teach basic skills, combining education with work experience). Secondary vocational education could give first priority to *broader education* and less to training in specific job skills; that is, it could provide remedial education, employability skills, occupational and educational information, and finally occupationally specific skills and placement. Postsecondary vocational education could emphasize training in occupationally specific skills. This design would require close articulation of secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs.

- Vocational education can be a strong force in attracting employers to a local area and has a role in teaching entrepreneurial skills.

About Information-related Services

Research findings reinforce the value of information-related skills in the search for work.

- Job search skills accompanied by labor market information are of great value to all youth, especially the disadvantaged.

- Renewal of emphasis on making labor market and educational information available is needed. Information of this kind is useful in reducing unemployment.

About Transition-related Services

Effective transition and maximization of opportunities and training depend on well-coordinated transitions from one phase to the next.

- Coordination of services requires specific determination of what and how coordination is to take place as a matter of policy. Most successful collaborative efforts are initiated locally, with success depending on the individuals involved. Coordination can be enhanced by establishing similar regulations for all federal programs (e.g., eligibility spec-

ifications, reporting requirements, budget cycles) and making delivery systems less complicated. Institutional cooperation is possible where incentives are appropriately structured.

- Relationship between public-sponsored youth employment programs and community-based organizations will benefit the effectiveness of these programs.

- Placement, sorting, and credentialling were key factors in explaining the positive impacts of CETA training. Placement services and job search training appear to be low-cost and effective ways of increasing short-term employment for job-ready youth.

- Some government policies established for other purposes reduce youth employment opportunities (e.g., minimum wage, payroll taxes).

About Work-Experience-related Services

Research data emphasize the advantages of previous work experience to the potential entrant to the job market.

- A significant number of youth lack a resume reflecting credible work experience and appropriate work habits.

- Work experience in high school is related to fewer weeks of unemployment in the year after graduation. School supervision of work experience is related to equity achievement (by sex and race), higher skill levels, and occupational status.

- Manufacturers prefer to collaborate with vocational education by providing work experience.

- Work experience (even if supervised) without education is ineffective at reducing school dropouts, encouraging return to school, or improving employability.

- Placement rates for vocational education students depend on an active local economy and the type and size of industries in the economy.

- Public service employment and subsidized private employment are as effective in developing employability skills as other types of employment.

Summary

This section of the discussion identified and described major components of a comprehensive employment-related education and training policy to address youth employment. Upon reflection, the following points seem most significant to federal vocational education policy development.

First, a wide array of services is needed at all times to ensure youth employment. To be effective and efficient, these services must be sensitive and responsive to the varying vocational development status and other characteristics of youth and the condition of the labor market. Different service emphases are needed at different developmental phases, for youth with different characteristics (e.g., income level, place of residence), and with changing labor markets.

Second, the identified services can be and are effective in improving youth employment—they do work. However, lack of one service component can limit the success of another (e.g., training without placement, guidance without labor market information). There is also substantial room for improving quality and quantity of services.

Third, vocational education is a major provider of the education-related service component and, to some extent, most other types of needed services to improve youth employment. This capacity could be altered in quality, scope, and mix of services.

Fourth, many other public and private agencies, institutions, and entities, are also providing effective services to improve youth employment. Complete and efficient coverage of needs to ensure youth employment will require coordination in planning, delivery, and evaluation of all service components.

Fifth, the delivery of service components takes place at the local level in unique situations; success of any federal initiative depends heavily on what localities and states are willing and able to do. The federal government should align its expectations and strategy with attention to this reality. If federal initiatives are to be carried out, they must also be initiatives for states and local communities.

CHAPTER 5

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FEDERAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY

This section provides a brief summary of current federal youth employment policies as a context for viewing the policy recommendations that follow. In table 12, present policies are categorized into those focused on increasing employment demand; increasing access and education-related services, and improving information, transition, and work-experience-related services. The newest program, which began 1 October 1983, is the Job Training Partnership Act, which is to replace CETA.

TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF PRESENT FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT AFFECT THE YOUTH LABOR MARKET
(In millions of dollars)

Program	Authorized 1982 Funding	1982 Appropriations or Estimated Revenue Losses (unless otherwise specified)	Program Description
Increasing employment demand			
Targeted Jobs Tax Credit	--	243[a]	Provides a nonrefundable tax credit to employers hiring persons in specific groups, including disadvantaged youths
Economic Development Programs	1,157[b]	1,009[c]	Provide place-oriented incentives for private-sector investment in areas of high unemployment or low income.
Minimum wage provisions	--	--	The Fair Labor Standards Act currently provides for a minimum wage of $3.35 per hour. A subminimum wage is available to certain employers of students through Labor Department certification.

TABLE 12 (continued)

Program	Authorized 1982 Funding	1982 Appropriations or Estimated Revenue Losses (unless otherwise specified	Program Description
Increaseing access and education-related services			
Job Training Partnership Act	2,800[d]	--	Provides programs to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force and to afford job training programs to the economically disadvantaged.
Vocational education	735[e]	646[e]	Provides federal dollars to supplement vocational expenditures at the state and local levels. Vocational education programs provide job skill training in secondary and post-secondary schools.
Improving information transition, and work-experience-related services			
U.S. Employment Service	--[f]	735[g]	Distributes funds to state employment service agencies to provide job seekers with labor market information and placement assistance.

SOURCE: Christensen (1982, pp. 25-28). Congress and Budget Office Sources: Funding authorization information is taken from the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Amounts appropriated are taken from the 1982 appropriations bills, or H. J. Resolution 370 (P. L. 97-92), as interpreted by agency budget officers.

Supplemental Source: For the Jobs Training Partnership Act, information was based on more recent congressional action.

[a] An additional $30 million in administrative expenses is authorized under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, although only $20 million was appropriated under H. J. Resolution 370 (P. L. 97-92).

[b] Includes $500 million for Urban Development Action Grants, $290 million for the Economic Development Administration, and $367 million for Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs). Total funding for CDBGs is $3,666 million, but only about 10 percent of this is for economic development activities. This figure does not include amounts authorized for the Farmers Home Administration Business and Industrial Loan Programs.

[c] Includes $440 million for Urban Development Action Grants, $223 million for the Economic Development Administration, and $346 million for Community Development Block Grants.

[d] This program began on 1 October 1983; the funding described is for the first nine-month period.

[e] Additional federal funding for vocational education programs at the postsecondary level occurs through grants to individuals, such as Pell grants.

[f] Only a portion of the U.S. Employment Service budget was addressed in the Omnibus Reconciliation Act.

[g] Includes funding for grants to states to carry out the provisions of the Wagner-Peyser Act, as well as activities mandated under other legislation, such as the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act. Some additional resources are available for services rendered to CETA prime sponsors, local welfare agencies, and others.

CHAPTER 6

ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

This section will describe a series of alternatives with recommendations for reaffirming, refining, and redirecting federal vocational education policy in aiding youth employment. The policy alternatives, recommendations, and their discussion are derived from the preceding analysis of the youth employment problem and the role vocational education might play in its amelioration. The criteria used in developing and discussing the recommendations are presented first.

Criteria for Policy Recommendations

Four criteria gleaned from reviewing proposed policy analysis procedures, discussing the process of managing policy development, and reading policy analysis papers were used as a basis for the following policy recommendations. The criteria are as follows:

- **Gives purpose to government enterprise**—Can the policy recommendation be clearly and easily seen to improve youth employment by professionals as well as the general public? Is the recommendation consistent with the prescribed role of government, in this case the federal government? Does the policy recommendation address defined factors that contribute to the youth employment problem?

- **Effective**—Is there a high probability that the policy recommendation will enhance youth employment? Effectiveness may be specific to a particular target group, problem type, and/or situation.

- **Feasible**—Is the policy recommendation politically plausible, in that relevant governmental units will agree to authorize the programs and appropriate resources? Is it administratively possible to implement and sustain the recommendation in terms of quantity, quality, staff restraints, and organizational capacity?

- **Integration/coherence**—Does the recommendation fit together with agency mission, other purposes of this agency, and other recommendations made? Does the recommendation complement the purposes and activities of other related agencies?

Implementation of the criteria is necessarily uneven because of the quantity and quality of information it was possible to address in this policy analysis paper.

Policy Alternatives and Recommendations

Normally, a policy analysis paper proceeds to a series of policy alternatives for which advantages and disadvantages are provided as a basis for consideration and possible decision by poli-

cymakers. This paper will move in that direction, but with a special feature. The service components of a youth employment policy might have been considered alternatives, except that past experience has suggested that all components are necessary if youth employment problems are to be reduced substantially. And so the components do not really stand as alternatives, but as unique and necessary parts of a total system. In this context, alternatives have been constructed around a series of tensions, or issues, focusing on the relative emphasis to be given various service components. The tensions for federal vocational education policy are the following:

- Emphasis on serving all youth versus youth with high risk of experiencing employment problems.
- Emphasis on serving younger versus older youth.
- Emphasis on providing education services only versus education *and* other employment-related services.
- Emphasis on reducing labor supply versus demand-side causes of youth unemployment.

Some of the other tensions are emphasis on providing short-term employment versus long-term employability, emphasis on preventing employment problems versus remediating problems once they occur, and emphasis on federal government operations through states with matching resources versus directly with local education agencies. These tensions were contemplated for inclusion here but are already covered in the recommendations addressing the above tensions. Also, sufficient information was not available from this analysis to develop specific recommendations about these tensions.

Each policy alternative is discussed briefly to make the tension clear and to give some background. Following this discussion are the policy recommendations that are thought to address most effectively the role of the federal government in the policy arena of youth employment. Recommendations are as specific as the preceding analysis allowed and are based on examination of the sources of the youth employment problem. Each recommendation is followed by a listing of its available relevant facts, assumptions, contribution to federal government purpose, effectiveness, feasibility, and integration.

Policy Alternative: Emphasize Serving all Youth versus Youth with High Risk of Unemployment

As noted in the section on the size of the youth work force and future trends in youth employment patterns, there will be about 32 million youth in 1990 (down from almost 39 million in 1980). All are potentially at risk regarding employment problems. Should vocational education assist in preventing these problems for all youth or focus its efforts on those most likely to experience long periods of unemployment (at current rates, perhaps numbering 1 million)? The matter is complicated by the difficulty in predicting beforehand which youth will have employment problems. What is known is that youth who drop out of high school, live in poverty areas, and are of minority race are more likely to have these problems.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should assume leadership in ensuring that vocational education is responsive to the employability needs of all youth who want to work. Special focus of federal attention and resources should be directed to youth at most risk regarding sustained employment problems.** The purpose of federal vocational

education legislation for the past twenty years has been to provide preparation for work that is of high quality, allows ready access, and is suited to the needs and interests of students. That legislation has helped to develop an existing system with substantial capacity for educating youth (i.e., enrolling more than 17 million students in twenty thousand institutions and employing more than three hundred seventy thousand full- and part-time teachers). This diversified and decentralized system is effective. It is widely available and has considerable capacity in facilities, teachers, and curriculum. It has built a niche among the other entities assisting in the process of preparing young people for work. This system should be maintained and improved in its effectiveness and efficiency.

At the same time, federal resources, in the context of a mandate to ensure equality of opportunity, should be used to improve the opportunity of those youth most at risk regarding unemployment. Vocational education's capacity has been found to be poorest in the same geographic areas where those most at risk are living: areas experiencing poverty, high-proportion minority race residency, high unemployment rates, and low educational attainment among youth. The federal government should target some of its resources to these areas through formulas used to distribute federal funds to states, through special competitive grants directly to local educational agencies serving these areas, or through other appropriate means. Ensuring a system of vocational education responsive to all youth, with particular federal attention to youth at high risk regarding sustained unemployment, would provide fairer distribution of employment among youth and improve the overall employment of youth.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should take the lead in ensuring that all vocational education programs are of high quality and up-to-date in technology.** If student time is to be used as effectively in vocational education as it can be in other forms of education or experience, and particularly if it is to provide an "edge" for youth at risk, vocational education must operate at the highest level of current practice. Therefore, program curriculum and facilities must reflect present and future changes in technology affecting the workplace. Further, the most effective and efficient means of instruction must be provided by staff who are knowledgeable about both the state of the art in education and training for the labor market.

  Vocational education is the beneficiary of many task analyses of occupations conducted in the past and present; but this is not enough. Along with good information about the present content of jobs for which training is provided, information is needed about the *rate* of change in these jobs and the specific nature of changes. Knowledge of these changes has particular implications for teaching basic skills, employability skills, career exploration, and labor market information in vocational education, as well as for teaching job-specific skills. In this light, teaching basic skills in vocational education takes on new meaning and importance; these skills become the foundation for developing long-term employability. Local program advisory committees can be an important source of information on the changing organization and technology of the workplace. In accomplishing this recommendation, vocational education has the opportunity to link closely with business and industry, as well as with the wider education and training professions. This recommendation is focused on reducing youth employment problems caused by structural factors.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should take leadership to ensure that the vocational education profession is clear as to what it is accomplishing and that this is made clearly and widely known to vocational education's various publics.** By examining

students' tests and grades, it becomes obvious what students learn in vocational education courses. What is much less obvious is whether what is learned is known and valued in the labor market (even though those representing the labor market to vocational education indicate that the skills are valued). The error may be in assuming that students are aware of what they know (that others don't) and that employers are aware of this difference.

The recommendation is that vocational education should certify what students know at the time they leave a program and that the value of this certification be clearly and widely communicated to those who should know—parents, employers, legislators. Employers particularly must be made aware of what students of vocational education know and how this knowledge relates to their productivity and work expectations. The certification process will involve performance testing and description of students on the basis of what they know. The development of standardized tests for various occupational areas is already well underway. Means are also available to communicate what students know to employers on an individual basis; more communication of this kind is needed.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should assume leadership to ensure, at a minimum, that all vocational education programs certify that students have learned employability (job-seeking and job-coping) skills.** A major component of youth unemployment is related to the greater frequency (as compared to adults) with which youth enter and reenter the labor market. Each entry is often preceded by a period of unemployment. Increased instruction in the processes of job seeking and job coping is likely to reduce the average unemployment rate and duration. This training need not be of long duration. Successful demonstration programs for job-seeking skills have been as short as several days in length with appropriate follow-up supportive services.

  The provision of job-seeking and job-coping skills appears fundamental even without other training (i.e., specific job skills, basic skills). The costs of this training would be relatively low. Curriculum materials have already been developed in several forms. Vocational teachers, although generally knowledgeable about the occupations they teach, may need inservice education on teaching job-seeking and job-coping skills. These skills could be taught as separate classes or integrated into more occupationally specific classes. They should be addressed at the outset of vocational education. By age fourteen or fifteen, youth who choose vocational education should know how to search for an appropriate job and to cope with a job once it is entered.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should take leadership in ensuring that vocational education programs attract students with a wide range of ability and socioeconomic status.** As recommended earlier, vocational education should take the responsibility of ensuring the employability of *all youth* who want to work. One of the effective means of assisting the disadvantaged is by involving them in meaningful educational experiences with their more advantaged peers. As part of the public school system, both secondary and postsecondary, vocational education has the opportunity to use this strategy—a strategy not available to other employment and training endeavors more specifically targeted to disadvantaged youth. By attracting a large proportion of all high school students, this diversity among students would be at least partially ensured. Vocational education can contribute to the democratic values of our society by this strategy. The emphasis on basic skills and employability skills along with job skills at the secondary level should facilitate reaching this recommendation targeted on improving the unequal distribution of employment problems among youth.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should assume leadership in ensuring that youth most at risk regarding sustained employability problems have a long-term, individual employability plan.** Those youth with high probability of employment problems, either expected or actual, should be provided the opportunity to develop a formal employability plan. This plan would outline the goals of the individual and stipulate commitments made by the student, parents, school, and labor market (perhaps a particular employer).

  Vocational education might also take responsibility for initiating and facilitating the plan development. These plans could be similar to the individual educational plans developed for special education students. The experience in special education could be used as a model in defining expectations and implementing these plans. As with the prior recommendation, the target is on reducing disparities in the distribution of employment problems among youth.

Policy Alternative: Emphasize Serving Younger versus Older Youth

For vocational education, this tension is quickly translated into an emphasis on secondary versus postsecondary and adult programs. At age fourteen to fifteen, most youth are in school and not looking for work. By age sixteen to seventeen, job holding begins, some have dropped out of school, and over half are working or looking for work. Working is often part-time during the school year and summer. At age eighteen to nineteen, most leave high school and go to work or further schooling; almost 75 percent of this group works full- or part-time. During their early twenties most youth are moving toward self-support.

Through the period of youth, individuals normally become more committed to work, seek more permanent and rewarding jobs, shift from part-time to full-time work, change occupations and industries, increase earnings, increase work skills and labor market knowledge, and are perceived as more reliable by employers. Trauma during this time is associated with dropping out of school, drug or alcohol addictions, arrest for crime, discrimination, early childbirth, marriage, moving away from home, and unemployment. Different combinations of services are needed at various phases of vocational development to impact on these traumas. Should the federal government emphasize serving one group at the expense of the others?

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should take a leadership role in ensuring clarification and communication to the public of the similarities and differences in the goals of secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs. Similarities and differences should be evident in federal accountability requirements. These programs should be responsive to the vocational development needs of their students.** Secondary vocational education should teach basic skills, employability skills, and job-specific skills, in that order of priority. The emphasis of secondary vocational education should be on long-term employability. Postsecondary vocational programs should teach job-specific skills, employability skills, and basic skills, again in that order of priority. The different order of emphasis is appropriate to the vocational developmental stage of typical students in these two levels of programs. Emphasis on basic skills and employability skills at the secondary level would partially alleviate the tension and forced choice on students to take fewer academic courses when they take vocational education. Also the focus on more general employability skills fits their need to begin to make the transition to work—work generally made up of a wide variety of jobs during the period of youth. Widely transferable skills are most important at this time.

Less emphasis on job-specific skills fits the labor market available to youth. Access to first jobs, while requiring some minimal level of basic skills, requires very little in the way of specific job skills. A new skill of use to these students may be how to learn on their own from working in these low-skill jobs. The opposite priority in emphasis seems appropriate at the postsecondary level, given the above recommendation for secondary vocational education. Approximately 75 percent of high school students take some vocational education courses. If secondary vocational education programs emphasize basic skills and employability skills, there should be less need for focus in this direction at the postsecondary level. Here an emphasis on job-specific skills should match with the vocational development of the student and the nature of the jobs available to students at their normal age of leaving school.

However, training in basic skills and employability skills must still be available for students who did not develop them at the secondary level, either by choice or because they dropped out of school. Also, it should be recognized that there are various levels of basic skills. The advanced levels involving problem solving, analysis, synthesis, interpretation, and evaluation can always be increased. There are the "learning to learn" skills that will reduce future training costs for youth and society. This recommendation concerning similarity and differences in goals will mean some differentiation in evaluation criteria for different levels of programs. The ability to get a job, hold it successfully, and negotiate effectively in the labor market would be an important criterion for secondary vocational education; but high expectations of placement in training-related occupations and earning advantage would be much less appropriate.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should take the lead in stimulating and facilitating closer articulation in the content and student transfer among secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs so as to compose a system of education responsive to the vocational development needs of youth and the labor market.** With the difference in relative focus of secondary and postsecondary vocational education, and with the delay of concentrated job-specific training, it is important to put in place plain and direct procedures for youth to continue their vocational education either directly after high school or after some intervening period of time. This ready access is important if youth are to have opportunity to enter more skilled, "adult" jobs through vocational education while efficiently building on the vocational education and work experience they already have.

  As secondary vocational education teaches basic skills (including the more advanced levels) and employability skills to avoid "shortchanging" students taking vocational education in academic preparation, it is more likely students will need more specialized training at the postsecondary level. Vocational education has, in the recent past, emphasized the need for articulation; the problem has been intensively studied, with detailed recommendations made for its provision. What is needed now is renewed commitment to action. The decline in the youth population already being experienced at the postsecondary level in terms of enrollments might serve as a motivating factor in stimulating renewed attention to the matter of program articulation. The provision for close articulation is necessary if disadvantaged youth are to penetrate to higher-level jobs in ways that use their full abilities.

Policy Alternative: Emphasize Providing Education Only versus Education and Other Services

Vocational education is seen primarily as a deliverer of education and training, and not so much as a provider of the other services needed for a comprehensive employment plan (e.g., access, information, transition, and work-experience-related services). However, these latter services are, to some degree, supplied by vocational education. Should the relative emphasis in vocational education move toward increased attention to these latter services in addition to (and perhaps at the expense of) education-related services?

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should assume a leadership role to ensure that vocational education programs, at a minimum, teach career exploration and location and use of labor market information to all their students.** In order to make appropriate career decisions, students must know themselves, both their interests and aptitudes, and the world of work. In order to make satisfactory decisions, they need to know what interests various kinds of work will satisfy and the requirements of various kinds of work. Through career exploration and labor market information, students are assisted in making appropriate career decisions, which will allow them to manage their work lifes to their own satisfaction and to be productive in contributing to the satisfaction of others. It is necessary for vocational education to address this issue continuously at all levels since both individuals and the world of work change over time. This recommendation mainly addresses youth employment problems created by the structural characteristics of the labor market. Again, curriculum materials to teach both exploration and information are already available. Labor market information is becoming more readily available through the work of the National and State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees.

  However, as with employability skills, many vocational teachers may need inservice education to handle these topics appropriately. Teaching career exploration and labor market information should serve to increae students' motivation as they more clearly see and personalize the link between their vocational education preparation and the labor market. Further, these skills link directly with effective use of basic skills, employability skills, and occupationally specific skills as students become mature and become familiar with the labor market.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should take the lead to ensure that the supervised work experience portion of vocational education (cooperative vocational education) maintains a definite classroom training component and a definite training plan and that it involves occupations with real learning possibilities. These programs should be made available by the tenth grade if they are to assist in reducing early high school separation (dropping out).** Work experience has been shown to contribute to youth employability by providing a sort of "track record," but only when combined with training in basic skills, employability skills, and specific job skills. This linking program can provide assistance in making the first successful transition from school to work. Work placement sites must offer adequate opportunity to learn employment-related skills and attitudes. When this learning is accomplished, the placement site should be changed. Again experience and curriculum materials, as well as teacher/coordinator education, are already in place to ensure high quality.

Because these programs are relatively expensive compared to vocational education occurring only in classrooms, most gains could be obtained by targeting them first on youth with high risk regarding employment problems. Apprenticeship programs might be modified for use with secondary school students. Since dropping out of high school begins in the tenth grade and is substantial at that point, supervised work experience programs need to be available by that grade in combination with other special resources if they are to assist with this probable cause of later youth employment problems. Students who have already dropped out of high school are often reluctant to return to the traditional school program. Supervised work experience programs can provide a mechanism for students to continue their education in a special setting.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should assume leadership to ensure that students in vocational education programs have ready access to job placement and counseling services.** Again, as a means of reducing the duration of unemployment for youth, placement and counseling services must be readily available and should not be hampered by difficulties or complications related to transportation, location, limited hours of access, paperwork, and appointment scheduling. Optimal for high school students would be to have these services available in the school. Where these services are not available or where arrangements cannot be made to provide them through coordinated efforts with other agencies, vocational education should seek to provide them.

  Often, the school counseling staff may be short of time, with priority going to those students going on to higher education. At least equal time should be made available for those who want to go to work. Similarly at the postsecondary school level, job placement and counseling services must be readily available and might be provided by the employment service if those services are flexible enough in organization and delivery to meet the needs of youth. If services are to work for those most likely to experience employment problems, they must provide individual attention and the physical means to take students to potential employment sites and interviews. It is in placement that the investment already made in vocational education provides returns. This task is too critical to demonstrated effectiveness for it to be left to chance. Job placement and counseling activities are also an important source of feedback to vocational instructional programs on the strengths and weaknesses of their work, as well as on the changing nature of the labor market.

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should take the lead in ensuring that vocational education coordinates its efforts with other agencies and organizations (e.g., Private Industry Councils, employment service, apprenticeship organizations, state occupational information coordinating committees, community-based organizations) in order to provide youth employment service components effectively and efficiently.** Vocational education is not the most effective or efficient mechanism to provide all of the needed service components. Several are not particularly related to institutions with an educational mission. Some other service components are already effectively institutionalized in places other than vocational education. If services are to be provided in a systematic and continuous fashion, coordination will be required.

  Improved coordination has been achieved over the past several years and should be reinforced by implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act. Experience has shown that effective coordination requires the parties to have something to exchange, be of mutual benefit, be aware of how and why the other operates, respect and trust each other, have access to and communication with each other, and have at least some similarity in goals

and values. The concern for reducing youth employment problems can serve as a uniting mechanism if elevated to an appropriate degree of attention. The federal government can provide leadership in specifying what coordination is to take place (e.g., funding cycles, reporting schedules) and demonstrating this coordination at the federal level.

Policy Alternative: Emphasize Reducing Labor Market Supply-Side versus Demand-Side Causes

Vocational education was designed to have an impact most directly on the supply side of the labor market—on people who are present or future workers. However, evidence has been presented that vocational education can also influence labor market demand. For example, vocational education has been used as an economic development strategy to retain existing firms or attract new firms to a particular geographic area. Vocational education teaches entrepreneurial skills, which can lead to establishment of new firms and better management of existing firms. Improving labor demand, can have substantial effects on reducing youth employment problems. In this context, should vocational education increase its emphasis on more directly combating demand-side causes of youth employment problems, even at the expense of supply-side services?

- **Policy Recommendation: The federal government should be a leader in ensuring that vocational education is responsive as a mechanism to increase the quality and quantity of labor market demand. Both the quality and quantity of labor demand can substantially increase the employability of youth.** Jobs that offer real learning possibiliites, are not "dead end," and provide reasonable compensation and working conditions are important to the vocational development of youth. Sufficient jobs of this type are presently not available for youth (or even adults). Through teaching entrepreneurial skills as a component of an economic development strategy and through job creation efforts, vocational education can potentially impact on both the quality and quantity of labor market demand.

Limitations and Barriers

The major cause of employment problems is lack of jobs. This fact is the primary limitation or barrier to the effects of the above recommendations on the youth employment problems, particularly to youth most at risk. Vocational education, as is true for any supply-side mechanism, simply does not create jobs in any very direct way on a large scale. Therefore, given the limit of available jobs and the probable position of youth in competing with adults for employment, vocational education's role in youth employment is destined to focus *primarily* on reducing frictional unemployment, reducing structural unemployment (where lack of training is the problem), *and* fostering the equal treatment of youth who seek employment. The above recommendations have this focus. Many do not involve new activities for vocational education. Several of the recommendations can benefit from research and development efforts already conducted (i.e., studies of secondary and postsecondary program articulation, career education, job placement and counseling, performance testing, transferable skills, and curriculum development). These past efforts need to be combined in a more comprehensive strategy and made available in such a way as to give priority access to youth most at risk regarding employment problems. Other recommendations, such as the shifting in goals of secondary versus postsecondary programs and obtaining and making use of better information about the rate of technological change in work, require new efforts with fresh starts.

The second constraint to implementing the recommendations was contained in the overall evaluation of vocational education in the Vocational Education Study conducted by the National Institute of Education (1979). The conclusion was that the federal government was expecting too much from too few resources and that vocational education programs were very diverse and under most direct control of local and state government. First, concerning resources, new activities and renewed emphasis on prior thrusts require substantial resources. If there are no additional resources, they must be obtained by diverting them from other uses. This policy paper has not specifically addressed opportunities for substitution or reallocation of resources to youth. The Job Training Partnership Act should serve as an appropriate supplementary source of resources to facilitate the implementation of several of the recommendations. Efforts should be made to inform vocational educators about the opportunities this act could provide. Second, concerning the control of vocational education and management of the changes suggested in the recommendations, the federal government has influence through the amount of its funding, accountability requirements, research and development, and technical assistance. At best, given the relatively small size of federal funds, these funds could probably be most effective if they were focused on recommended changes (as opposed to maintenance) and then advanced as incentives (as opposed to stringent laws and regulations).

A third constraint in implementing the above recommendations, particularly as they may involve the goal of fairer redistribution of unemployment among youth, concerns the availability of political courage and integrity. It will take considerable tenacity and resolve to take employment opportunities away from some youth (most likely those living in nonpoverty areas) and provide these opportunities to other youth (most likely living in poverty areas, often inner-city and rural and often of minority race). This is a serious political challenge for each level of government to face—especially so for a federal government seeking a just leadership role.

APPENDIX

SOURCES OF FINDINGS REGARDING SERVICE COMPONENTS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY

A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF EVALUATIONS OF PAST EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING-RELATED FEDERAL POLICY BY SOURCE

- National Commission for Employment Policy (1979a, 1981a)

  - Employment problems of disadvantaged youth should be a critical domestic issue.
  - Federal government should take lead role in improving employment prospects of these youth (with substantial role for state and local governments and community).
  - Federal resources should be targeted on those most in need.
  - Federal resources should be targeted on long-term employability (rather than short-term employment).
  - Need to improve basic educational competencies, broaden opportunities for minority and female youth, improve employment and training programs, and move disadvantaged youth into regular jobs.
  - Limit federal funds to activities that further the federal interest.
  - Use federal resources for program improvement and innovation, not maintenance.
  - Use federal funds to stimulate larger state and local expenditures to raise functional literacy and general employability skills.
  - Target federal funds to improve program in areas of high concentration of low-income families and high unemployment.
  - Postsecondary vocational education is more clearly associated than secondary programs with economic benefits in terms of employment and earnings, and these benefits may be especially high for the disadvantaged.
  - Use federal funds to increase access to postsecondary vocational education programs where positive benefits are clear and substantial.
  - Establish similar requirements (e.g., eligibility, funding cycles, reporting) for all employment and training programs.
    Continue federal interest in improving sex equity in vocational education.
  - Establish a clearer distinction between secondary (primarily education) and postsecondary (primarily specific job skills) vocational education.
  - There is much diversity in vocational education programs.

- National Institute of Education (1981) and the NIE contracted studies by Haney and Woods (1982) and Woods and Haney (1981)

  - Vocational education is a diverse and decentralized enterprise.
  - Federal vocational education policy attempts to accomplish too much with too few resources.
  - There are sometimes mismatches between the ends and means of federal policy.
  - Realizing the ends of federal policy depends heavily upon state and local policies, practices, and resources.
  - The central problem in coordinating vocational education and CETA programs was in determining specifically what was to be their functional and reciprocal relationship.
  - Available data for research were too limited and the research problem too difficult to attribute *outcomes* to specific vocational education experiences.

- Some forms of vocational education for some types of students are associated with a variety of gainful employment advantages (e.g., employment rate, status of job, number of weeks worked, and weekly earnings).
- Small amount of evidence that secondary vocational education has some "holding power" in keeping students in high school.
- Employment effects of vocational education are modest when compared to the effects of sex and race.
- Basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics are about the same for secondary vocational and general program students.
- Basic skills attainment by itself (for whites) does not show much effect on either employment status or earnings.

- National Center for Research in Vocational Education (Bishop 1982; Campbell et al. 1981; Campbell et al. 1982; Campbell, Gardner, and Seitz 1982b; Campbell, Orth, and Seitz 1981; Campbell, and Seitz 1982; Hotchkiss 1982; Lewis, Gardner, Seitz 1983; McKinney et al. 1981; Mertens et al. 1980; Gardner, Nunez and Russell 1982).

  - No differences in unemployment rates for vocational and nonvocational high school graduates; postsecondary vocational education graduates generally had lower unemployment rates than peers.
  - Vocational education students were below academic and above or equal to general curriculum students in basic skills.
  - Only one-third of vocational graduates in contrast to two-thirds of nonvocational graduates continue their education after high school.
  - Only about 11 percent are concentrators (take six or more credits in a specialty area).
  - The effects of race, sex, and socioeconomic status overwhelm the effects of participating in vocational education.
  - Increased participation in vocational education may be able to contribute modestly to improving productivity and narrowing income differentials (e.g., for sex and race groups).
  - Work experience in high school (involves about two-fifths of students) is related to fewer weeks of unemployment (7 to 12 percent reduction for white men, more for women and minority students) in the year after graduation; school supervision of work experience (about 15 percent of students) is related to equity achievement (in labor force participation for minority youth and pay for males) and high skill levels and occupations.
  - Secondary vocational education had small effect on reducing dropping out (one more credit of vocational education associated with 0.1 percent reduction in probability of dropping out); explanation was that vocational education does not become available until grades eleven and twelve, although dropout rate is highest in grade ten.
  - Vocational education graduates with occupationally specific training require 18 percent less on-the-job training and were 9 percent more productive in the first two weeks and 6-7 percent higher thereafter.
  - A large majority (85 percent) of manufacturers prefer to hire vocational graduates over nonvocational graduates for jobs requiring less than a four-year college degree.
  - Providing work experience was the most preferred form of collaboration with vocational education by manufacturers; both employability skills and job skills were most preferred to be taught at the high school level.
  - State legislators thought vocational education was doing particularly well at teaching job skills, increasing awareness of career opportunities, and teaching good work habits.

- Higher job placement for students participating in secondary vocational education is likely when (1) it is an agreed upon purpose of secondary vocational education (not primary purpose, as now seen by educators, students, parents and employers); (2) entry is restricted to students with high interest and potential; (3) staff enthusiastic and responsible for placing; (4) teachers have regular contact with employers over placement; (5) students participate in youth organizations; (6) students are provided basic education skills and job readiness skills; (7) staff resembles the racial balance of the community served; (8) transportation to jobs is available; and (9) curriculum is oriented to the needs of employers.

- Vice President's Task Force on Youth Employment (1980a)

  - Problems of youth unemployment will not disappear in the 1980s.
  - For high percentage of those at risk, lack of basic skills in communication, comprehension, and computation is the most serious barrier.
    Significant number of youth lack a resume reflecting credible work experience and appropriate work habits.
  - Delivery systems for programs must be less complicated.
  - Renew emphasis on making labor market information readily available.
  - Strengthen relationships between public youth programs and community-based organizations.
  - Youth employment problems are to complex to be addressed by a single institution or initiative.
  - Vocational schools are good at performing many of the above activities.
  - Employment, training, and education programs can and probably do work better than their reputations indicate.
  - No one strategy works for everyone.
  - Many of the shortcomings of programs are apparent but ignored.
  - Basic problems are not in identifying what works but in replicating the positive approaches.
  - Institutional cooperation is possible where incentives are appropriately structured.

- Office of Youth Programs, U.S. Department of Labor (Mangum & Walsh 1978; Rist et al. 1981; Taggart 1980; Taggart 1981; Taggart 1982; Taggart 1983). **Note:** While the later Taggart reports were not published by the Office of Youth Programs, they are included here because of his earlier connection with this office; although the Rist and coworkers was not published by the Office of Youth Programs, it is based on evaluations sponsored by the office.

  - Most types of service is of some use, but nothing has resulted in substantial reduction in youth unemployment.
  - Outreach was an overrated service.
  - Assessment is necessary as long as there are more clients than slots and a variety of services are available.
  - Work experience without education is ineffective at reducing school dropouts, encouraging return to school, or improving employability as any other employment.
  - Institutional training is cost-effective but is concentrated on low level, high-turnover occupations and segregates students.
  - On-the-job training has lacked the training component.
  - Counseling is a useful component of employability development and placement if focused on employment-related issues.

- Job search skills accompanied by labor market information are of great value to all youth, especially the disadvantaged.
- Need to involve disadvantaged (with support services) with advantaged youth in attractive training institutions.
- Train only in occupations that are in demand and normally require training for entry.
- Incorporate the best training practices available to compete with other modes of preparation.
- Link training with aggressive placement efforts and preferably with guaranteed employment.
- View youth employment from a developmental perspective; youth have different needs and require a different mix of service at different phases in development.
- Increase use of performance requirements for participants and standards for programs.
- Provide a multiyear sequencing of activities to build employment-related competencies.
- Competency attainment must be benchmarked to provide individual incentive, prescribe services, document performances to employers, and sort among the disadvantaged.
- Vocational training has not been a major element in remedial job training program for youth—participants have not had adequate basic academic skills to benefit from vocational education and stayed for too short a time.
- School-to-work transition process is highly volatile and involves a large element of chance; therefore, emphasize transferable competencies.
- Interventions that provided remedial education and employability skills were quite effective in improving subsequent labor market success (e.g., doubling of earnings).
- Placement, sorting, and accrediting were key factors in explaining positive impacts of CETA training.
- CETA programs were able to produce their impacts, even though they were targeted on those of low socioeconomic status, persons with low achievement, the disadvantaged, and minority groups least effectively served by vocational education.
- Secondary vocational education could be a primary provider of remedial education, employability skills, occupational information, occupationally specific skills, and placement; postsecondary programs could be a primary provider of occupationally specific skills; these two levels of education would have to be closely articulated.

- Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office (1976, 1977a, 1978, 1980b, 1982)

  - Very difficult to predict which unemployed teenagers will have persistent problems with unemployment; however, characteristics such as being of minority race or a high school dropout or among long-term unemployed increase chances.
  - Some government policies established for other purposes reduce youth employment opportunities (e.g., minimum wages, payroll taxes).
  - The largest share of federal education funds for youth that are untargeted comes from vocational education basic grant funds.
  - Wide variation exists in quality and extent of participation in vocational education.
  - Federal education programs for youth are fairly inexpensive on a per participant basis, primarily because of low expenditure per participant in vocational education programs (approximately $40 per student).
  - Federal expenditures for vocational education may partially substitute for expenditures by states and localities.

- For those who lack basic academic skills, this strategy of enhancing job qualifications must take priority; after basic skills are provided, transition to work can be assisted by providing career exploration, job search training, and other placement services before students leave high school.
- Success in the workplace is closely related to basic writing, communication, and computational skills.
- Work experience alone (even if supervised) does not improve employability of disadvantaged youth.
- Substantial gains in employability for disadvantaged youth are possible when they are offered a combination of services including remedial education, well-structured work experience, and training.
- Minimal behavioral and program performance standards are important to program success.
- Placement services and job search training appear to be low-cost and effective ways to increase short-term employment rates for job-ready youth.

- National Academy of Sciences (Sherman 1983).

  - The economic structure of the United States economy is shifting from manufacturing to service; although some service jobs require very little knowledge, on average the shift to services is likely to require more education of employees.
  - Although there is agreement that jobs are changing because of technological innovations, there is little agreement on the nature of these changes over the next twenty years. For some jobs, change will mean an increase in knowledge requirements; others will be broken into discrete, routine components requiring little thought. The advice to educators is to stay in close touch with employers and build a capacity to be flexible and adaptive to changes.
  - A direct relationship exists between youth unemployment rates and lack of schooling; young people dropping out of school later have a more difficult time obtaining a job.
  - Some vocational education programs have kept pace with technological change, and others are poorly matched to the labor market; placement rates often depend on an active local economy.
  - Effectiveness of vocational education should be interpreted in the context of the effectiveness of all of American secondary education.
    Wide variation exists in the effectiveness of vocational education programs.
  - Work experience alone, without services such as training and placement, does not appear to improve the employability of disadvantaged youth.
  - Vocational education can be a strong force in attracting employers to an area.
  - Most successful collaboration efforts are initiated locally and success often depends on the individuals involved.

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